

## Opening:

No one likes to experience shame, or embarrassment – but we all do from time to time.

What causes you to feel embarrassed? What causes you to feel ashamed?

Testimonies:

You're most embarrassing moment testimony ... one or two share.

Paul writes in **Romans 1:16** NKJV *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.*

- Why would Paul use this phrase?
- Why would God include this in Holy Scripture?
- If you or I were to use the phrase, “but I am not ashamed of \_\_\_\_\_”
  - What would that imply?
  - It implies that there may SEEM to be reason to be ashamed.

My most embarrassing moment... Finley's restaurant ... “Didn't I see you in The Buff”

**Romans 1:16** NKJV *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.*

- Why might Paul have to explain why he is not ashamed of the Gospel?
  - The book of Romans was written approx. 57 AD
  - Paul is returning to Jerusalem after his 3<sup>rd</sup> missionary journey
  - During those journeys Paul had been arrested, beaten, stoned, abandoned, misunderstood, rejected, and even left for dead
  - Having converted to Christianity from Judaism, meant that he had lost all credibility among his own people and ruined his professional standing as a Rabbi & Scholar
  - Even many Christians had rejected him
    - Fearing he was an undercover agent of the Jewish leaders out to arrest Christians
    - Or misunderstanding his theology and his emphasis on reaching the Gentiles
  - And, although he did not yet know this when he wrote Romans, he was about to be arrested in Jerusalem under false accusations and sentenced to death!
  - Paul wrote this letter in anticipation of coming to Rome – he had not yet been there.
    - Little did he know that when he would eventually arrive in Rome, he would be bound in chains and locked in a dungeon.

But Paul boldly proclaims, “I am not ashamed of the Gospel ... “

- How could Paul say this when, as he wrote in another letter that because of the gospel he had “*suffered the loss of all things*”? (**Phil 3:8**)
- Paul could say this because he knew that the value of the gospel
  - To him personally
  - To those he had ministered to
  - Was worth FAR MORE than all that he had suffered and lost

- **Romans 8:18** NKJV *For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us.*

### **Are you ashamed of the Gospel?**

1. My goal in this new series is to encourage and provoke us all to share the gospel this summer
  - a) Over the next several weeks I intend to unpack some compelling reasons why we should tell others "the good news."
  - b) **Proverbs 10:5** NKJV *He who gathers in summer is a wise son; He who sleeps in harvest is a son who causes shame.*
  - c) Let's all make a commitment to lead one person to the Lord and see them connected here at New Day this summer.
2. But, like Paul, the first issue that has to be addressed is "*Are you ashamed of the Gospel.*"
  - a) I've never heard anyone preach this, but it's something I've thought about a lot
  - b) It's not something we are likely to admit, or even be consciously aware of – but I feel it affects how we represent (or fail to represent) Jesus, the Church and Christianity
  - c) When Paul was sitting in jail, bleeding, sore, hungry and tired
    - It didn't look like the message he was preaching was working
  - d) Sometimes in life we may find ourselves in the midst of circumstances that may not "look so good"
    - In fact there may be times when we wonder, "Is what I believe true? Is it "working" for me?"
    - If you feel as though the gospel is not "working" for you – you will have little motivation to share it with others.
    - If the enemy can't get you to reject Christ, then he'll do all that he can to make you miserable – so that you are no longer a threat to his kingdom and those he has under his control.
    - This is a major strategy of the devil
    - But WE have authority to overcome this strategy!!!!

### **Paul Overcame This Obstacle**

1. Because he based his evaluation of the gospel, NOT on his circumstances
  - a) But on the person and promise of Jesus Christ
  - b) And on the historical fact of the literal resurrection of Jesus from the dead
2. He based his evaluation of the gospel (and his own life) not on the temporary results that he had (or was) experiencing, but on the eternal reward he had confidence in.
3. Paul was able to overcome this obstacle because he saw his life from the correct perspective – TWO ASPECTS of this perspective:
  - a) First: He saw his life from God's eternal perspective
    - He knew his ultimate destiny
    - He could see his problems & circumstances were small, nothing, in comparison to the eternal value of the gospel and his reward in Christ's kingdom
  - b) Secondly: He didn't isolate himself within a Christian "bubble." He lived out in the

midst of a perverted, broken world. Daily interacting with unbelievers.

- Paul sought out and actively engaged in the most heathen cultures of his time
- He wrote Romans, while living in Corinth
  - A Greek city known as the vilest city of all
  - To call someone a Corinthian, was actually a common insult
  - The main temple in Corinth was dedicated to “Venus” (the god representing lust) and had over 1000 temple prostitutes
- Sometimes we loose sight of the VALUE of the gospel because we loose sight of those who need the gospel!
  - Its easy to isolate ourselves within a Christian culture
  - Its easy to overlook the despair in other's lives
  - Its easy to get so taken up with our own issues, that we feel we don't have the time or energy to help others (when our help if found in helping others – by giving, we receive)
  - And then we can become numbed by the media when they expose something overwhelming – like what has been found in Texas
  - We can be tempted to pull back, and think -- “what can I offer – I'm having a hard enough time getting my life together...”
- c) Paul's response was to engage in people's lives, and the culture in which he lived
  - He knew the value of the gospel because he saw the evidence of it in the changed lives of those who received it
  - And he had experience the transformation of his own life

### Application

1. Are you ashamed of the Gospel
  - a) Are you at a place where you are tempted to say, “It's not workin' for me?”
    - If so:
      - What is God trying to say to you right now, in this place/time/condition?
      - What is God's perspective on your problems and life?
      - Looking back 1000 years from now, what will really matter?
    - Compare your life to those the Bible describes as “without Christ ... having no hope and without God in the world.” The condition we shared before we came to know Jesus as Lord.
  - b) Or have you allowed the enemy & the world to convince you that even though it may work for you – it may not be the answer for your neighbor or co-worker?
    - Have you “let well enough alone”
    - Have you allowed those who tell you to keep your faith private – and bought into the lie that all religions lead to heaven????
  - c) Or maybe you've just put reaching out to the lost low on your priority
2. I challenge you to “not be ashamed of the Gospel”
3. Paul was able to stand up against the religious system of his day that wanted to shut him up; he was able to stand up against the Roman Empire that wanted him to shut up; he was able to stand against every influence that tried to silence him – because he was not ashamed – Let's learn from his example and Stand Up for Jesus!