

## Romans Study Part 4

### *Not Ashamed*

#### Romans 1:16-17

#### Opening Thought

Paul's confidence in the Gospel came after a life-changing encounter with Jesus Christ. After meeting Christ, Paul spent over 20 years traveling thousands of miles by foot, ship, and eventually in chains to carry the Gospel to places where Christ had not yet been preached. His declaration, "I am not ashamed," was not a casual statement, but a bold commitment to suffer anything necessary for the cause of Christ.

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#### Romans 1:16

#### Not Ashamed of the Gospel

"For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ..."

The word "ashamed" comes from the Greek word:

**ἐπαισχύνομαι (*epaischynomai*)**

Meaning:

- embarrassed,
- fearful to identify with,
- unwilling to publicly stand with,
- or shrinking back because of pressure or opposition.

To think of it, The Gospel of Jesus Christ was very offensive to many.

- To the Jews, a crucified Messiah was scandalous because Deuteronomy 21:23 declared that anyone hung on a tree was cursed. Salvation through faith in Christ rather than strict law-keeping challenged many of their expectations.
- To the Greeks, the message seemed foolish because the idea of God becoming flesh and dying on a cross contradicted worldly wisdom and philosophy.

Yet to sinners in need of grace, the Gospel was exactly what humanity needed.

## The Power of Knowing

The verse begins with the word “**for**,” which connects Paul’s statement back to verse 15, where he declares how ready and eager he is to preach the Gospel in Rome. Paul understood the danger, resistance, and persecution connected to carrying the message of Christ, especially in the center of the Roman Empire and even in Jerusalem (Romans 15). Even with warnings, risks, and suffering ahead, Paul remained committed because he knew that the power of God was greater than the threats before him.

Furthermore, Paul’s growing understanding of the transformative, life-changing power of the Gospel of Jesus Christ made the idea of suffering seem smaller in comparison to the greatness of God and the urgency of spreading this great Gospel. Therefore, Paul refused to retreat from the Gospel even if it cost him suffering, chains, rejection, or even death.

*Paul’s life commitment to the Gospel of Jesus Christ echoes this quote “When you truly understand the power of God, fear loses its control over your faith.” Author unknown*

That is why Paul boldly declares:

“I am not ashamed.”

“Though many rejected the Gospel, Paul knew there were many more who still needed its power.”

“The Gospel is for every creature and every creature needs it.”  
— Dwight L. Moody

## Special Note

Almost every major English translation — from the KJV to the NKJV, ESV, NIV, NASB, CSB, and even the NLT — preserves the words “not ashamed.” Translators consistently kept these words because no other wording fully captures the conviction, courage, and confidence flowing from Paul’s heart in this letter. Although these words were originally written in Greek, nearly every English translation chose to preserve the exact phrase: “not ashamed.”

## Supporting Scripture

### 2 Timothy 1:12 (NLT)

“That is why I am suffering here in prison. But I am not ashamed of it, for I know the one in whom I trust, and I am sure that he is able to guard what I have entrusted to him until the day of his return.”

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## Interactive Question

Why is it sometimes difficult to remain bold about our faith in compromising environments?

## Power of God unto Salvation

“For it is the power of God unto salvation to everyone who believes...”

— Romans 1:16

The word “power” Paul uses is the Greek word *dynamis* — a mighty, all-consuming power able to move obstacles out of the way. Humanity faced a great obstacle: the powerful hold of sin over the flesh. The law was holy, righteous, and revealed God’s standard, but humanity lacked the spiritual strength to consistently obey God because sin continually caused people to exchange the truth of God for a lie.

Therefore, through Jesus Christ, God released His *dynamis* power unto salvation. Salvation is more than forgiveness — it is freedom. Christ came to break the hold of sin, defeat death, and empower believers to live free in relationship with God once again. Freedom in God is not lawlessness, but holiness. God never lowered His standard; through the Gospel He empowered believers through faith to live according to His righteous standard.

The power of the Gospel eliminated the obstacle that separated humanity from God. What humanity could not accomplish through human effort, Christ accomplished through His death, resurrection, and power. The Jews encountered this saving power first through Jesus Christ, and then the Gospel spread to the Gentile world through the ministry of the apostles like Paul and Peter. Through the Gospel, God empowered humanity to be free from the hold of sin and restored back into right relationship with Him.

“The law revealed God’s standard, but the power of Christ empowers believers to walk in freedom and holiness through faith.”

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## Righteousness of God

“For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith; as it is written, ‘The just shall live by faith.’”

— Romans 1:17

The righteousness of God is the standard of God and the very essence of who God is. God Himself is the standard for right living, holy judgment, and perfect justice. Humanity may be declared righteous, but God alone is righteousness.

Because everything about God is righteous, His holy character is revealed through His righteous plan to bring humanity back into relationship with Himself. Since sin prevented us from

producing righteousness on our own, God provided a way through Jesus Christ for us to be declared righteous before Him.

This righteous plan is revealed “from faith to faith.” Faith is our confidence in God that causes us to believe His Word and act upon it. As we continue walking with God from one faith experience to another, His power and righteousness continue to be revealed in our lives.

In the Gospel is the righteous power of God. Though humanity rejected Him and wandered away from Him, God still chose to use His power to save us through Christ.

“God did not merely intend to save us — through His power, He saved us.”

“The just shall live by faith” becomes the anthem of Romans and the Christian life. Throughout Scripture, God’s people are called to walk, live, endure, and exist by faith.

### **Supporting Scriptures**

- Romans 1:17
- Galatians 3:11
- Hebrews 10:38

As a car operates by fuel, the believer operates by faith. Without faith it is impossible to please God or fulfill His purpose. As we walk by faith, God reveals His power through our lives so His name may be glorified in the earth.

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### **Interactive Question**

What are the things that most fuel your faith and strengthen your confidence in God? Conversely, what are the things that tend to drain your faith, weaken your spiritual focus, or pull your heart away from trusting Him?

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### **Closing Thought**

The call to walk by faith becomes even more important as Paul transitions into the next section of Romans, where he reveals the condition of humanity apart from God. People become spiritually blinded because they continually reject God and give themselves over to sinful desires. Yet even in the middle of darkness, God has called believers to walk by faith and shine as light in the world. So, Paul’s motivation was clear, there is no obstacle too great to keep him away from sharing the transformative message of Jesus Christ. Now what is our excuse?