

"AN ADEQUATE GOSPEL"

Romans 1:16

INTRODUCTION:

As we speak to you today, about Christ and his great salvation, I am sure that many of you have already made a public decision to follow Christ. That you are not ashamed to acknowledge Christ as your personal Saviour. That you bow before him as your rightful Master.

When Paul wrote his letter to the Romans, he had never visited Rome. He earnestly desired to do so. One fact being, of his Roman citizenship. And he declared in this book - I am not ashamed of the Gospel. And he gave his reasons why he was not ashamed. We wonder why he made this declaration. He was conscious of Rome and the dignity and the material power - the proud contempt, and the corruption of the masses. There is no question in his mind as to the power of the Gospel.

V.I

This letter opens in V. 1 - telling the author. It is a letter from Paul, a slave of Jesus Christ, who has been chosen to be a missionary. And sent out to preach God's Gospel.

So in his introduction - he tells us who the author is of the book. He tells us what the theme is -- "the Gospel of God." He tells us who the readers are to be - "the saints of Rome." And the key verses are verse 16 and 17. And probably the key word is righteousness.

In this time in which we live, the world has been shaken to its foundations. The whole world is still in a dreadful uproar. We have had wars and we have changes that have followed these wars, and we have continued to follow in the changes in government, in economics, in industry, in social, in financial, education, moral and religious. And we find a great deal of (instability) (Restructuring) - different sections of the entire world. There are misunderstandings on the national level. There is a lot of hate in the world today. And we find that there are a lot of people today in the world who are preaching something other than the Gospel. The message, motive, and mission of all of our Christian service is the Gospel.

Paul on one occasion said, we preach not ourselves. But the Lord Jesus Christ. 2 Cor. 4:5. We preach not ourselves. Now if you take that, you analyze it, the preacher who preaches Christ will have a Gospel. The preacher who preaches himself, will preach on spectulations, on opinions, on theories, on doubts.

One time a minister said that there was a man who preached on such subjects in series as autumn leaves, going up Salt River, skinning the Major, and Saul seeking his Father's asses. "Tell it not in gath, publish it not in the streets of Askalon."

The preacher who goes out and uses little (cheap theatricals) just to get the heart or the mind of people today - really is deadly poison. Within him, every urge of his heart is, if I can get some fame and some popularity, and some publicity in this ministry.

Did you know fame, popularity, and publicity is really nothing. Because the record is kept on high. And did you know that most of the best work done by a lot

of preachers in the world today, is done by men who do their job in a quiet nook and whose name never once appears in the newspapers.

You could not imagine somebody like B. H. Carroll or Spurgeon or Brodess putting on a performance for people to entertain them. Because Jesus said, "if I be lifted up from the earth, it will draw all men unto me."

So we are faced with a question today --

First, (do the people of God have an adequate remedy.) Do the church folks today, the religious folks today, have an adequate remedy for this (world situation) as it is. Do they have one that is potential enough, and dynamic enough, to meet the needs of human hearts. I believe with deep conviction, that we have the answer. And the remedy is stated by Paul in this first letter to the Romans. "I am not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God, unto salvation to every one that believeth."

Here is one of the (most glorious Gospel preachers) the world has ever known - the Apostle Paul. Dearer to him than his own life was the Gospel of Christ. He counted it the chief privilege in the world to proclaim the Gospel everywhere.

He actually counted himself a debtor to the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Whether they were wise or unwise - whether they were peasants or philosophers, Paul counted all of this a delight to tell men about Christ.

In Athens, that literary city, where culture was at its best at that time - Paul

had a conflict with the pagans, Christianity - and he came to visit that city. On the one hand, Paul was representing Christ. On the other hand, the philosophers were representing the stoics and epicureans. And they were seeking to tear down Paul's message. They wanted to discredit it. But Paul was not ashamed of that Gospel in Athens.

The point now is - Paul wants to try it out in Rome. On that seven hilled city - the city of chief power. In the ancient time. He longed to witness for Christ in that city where others lived. In a city where men put their trusts in visible powers. In the power of organization, pomp, and majesty. Now he was not ashamed to try out his Gospel against the power of the Roman empire.

Now Paul made his confession of his faith that he was going to give up everything to go and live and toil, and suffer to the end of his days. If finally he could lay down his life for the Gospel.

V. 1
Second, was Paul justified in his idea here? In the beginning, as to what he writes about in the first verse, he says he is writing to them about that beloved Gospel that he wanted to preach. To those people there at Rome.

He felt a bond servant. And the idea here is - the Gospel. It does not really denote the work of the preacher, nor actually the carrying of the Gospel. But the word that he mentions here in V. 1 is - that it (denotes) the message itself. The very essence and the quality - the divine character of the Gospel. Now Paul is dedicated to this Gospel. Now every one of us can personally dedicate ourselves to the Gospel in whatever we do. Whether we farm, whether we are in business, whether we are laymen. Whether we

have money, we can dedicate whatever it is to the Gospel.

In V. 2 - The Gospel is not something new - neither is it a revised version of the true religion. It is the fulfillment of the promise announced by the old prophets before hand in the Old Testament. Of the (promised son).

In V. 3 - Paul refers to the subject of the Gospel of God. And he denotes a personality. When you accept the Gospel - it is not subscribing to a book. But it is the (acceptance of the person). It is not a system - it is not a religion. It is not living up to a set of rules. But it is letting (a new person live in you). Til it is no longer you that liveth - but Christ that liveth in you. Gal. 2:20.

To refuse the Gospel is to deny a person. A sinner may disregard the message. But, he is dealing not with the preacher or the sermon - he is dealing with the person. So refusing the message does not really offend the preacher of the message. But it is the person that is offended - (Jesus Christ who is the divine Gospel).

V. 4 - Paul declares that it has been marked off - a place had been set up as a monument. It means to mark off, to establish a boundary, to set up a land mark. As evidence - and what is it - it is the (resurrection of Jesus). Here is the monument. Here is the proof that he is God, and being God in the light of his resurrection.

V. 5 - The Lord now becomes the agent in bestowing grace. The root meaning here is that it is (unmerited favor) that we receive.

Paul was not an Apostle by choice. Or by accident. But, by providence as he has already stated. He was called to be this Apostle of the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

So hurriedly we pass on to V. 14 in which Paul says I am a debtor. Debtor to the Redeemer. He is in debt to Christ. Who has entrusted him with a message. And he has the message and his responsibility - one day he says, I will have to give an account of my stewardship.

He is debtor to both Greeks and Barbarians. All of the Gentiles in their many languages - the Greeks use this term to include all people. The Jews used it to include all Gentiles. Which classified all nations - all of those who spoke foreign languages or strange languages. That are not understood. So this denoted the non-Greeks. So Paul has a foretaste of the glory. And he says here, that he is going to be debtor to all of these. You remember the inscription on the cross -- but Paul says every people, the people of every language, may have the righteousness provided - simply by the death of the cross.

In V. 15 - He feels the great debt of the lost world. His task is more than human. He will pay the debt he says, until all of his resources have been exhausted. He has already stated that he would be eager to preach the Gospel to Rome. And that means that he pants heavily - it means rapid breathing. It gives you the idea that Paul is bursting into a flame or in to uncontrolled breathing. He would like to give the Gospel to these people.

Now it is not something general - it is a definite Gospel that he absolutely has in mind. And he did not hesitate to say that he had the last word as to salvation.

V. 15 - The proof of his being ready is here stated in the sufferings of his body. He knows that the cross is unto the Jews a stumbling block. And the Greeks foolishness. But Christ is the power of God, and the Gospel message itself is what they need. It is not the act of caring or preaching the Gospel, it is the divine power of God. It works the energy - it is an active power. And he refers to this as the source of power.

Paul never says the law was called power. But he says grace is the power of God unto Salvation. And then he uses that word - believes. And that is individual. It is manifested to each individual separately. It is not by group, or tribe, or nation. It is a personal responsibility. And this is where the universality of the Gospel comes and each individual separately must receive it.

V. 17
This all takes place in V. 17 by a divine righteousness. Man has no righteousness - yet, he cannot be saved without it. And man cannot produce a righteousness - he is a victim of sin. And it means that there is only one way. And that all that God presents here is that you have to have the presence of God for this salvation.

So we come back to the question - was Paul justified in this course? That he has taken. Paul confesses - it is a joy to him. And as we come closer to it - are you justified Paul in this. Have you chosen the right way of safety and peace. Are you certain that you are on the right track?

Now Paul would answer that for us in two or three ways. First Paul would say, I am not ashamed of the author. Now the author of that Gospel is Christ. I am not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ. Paul hoped for time and eternity was in the person

of Jesus Christ. The key to his whole belief of Christianity was not a battle of theology - it was the person of Christ. Which stands and falls with the person of Christ.

We need to take our stand and declare without hesitation that the human race did not and could not produce Christ. If it could have produced one Christ, why has it not produced others who are equal. The task is tremendous. When we think that God is with us.

Was Paul justified - he would mention the author.

Second, he would mention the author's words. The word was made flesh. No wonder Paul said without controversy - great is the mystery of Godliness. God was manifest in the flesh - justified in the spirit, seen of angels. Preached unto the Gentiles. Believed on in the world. Received up into Glory.

Look at Christ's words. You take any word that he spoke -- neither man spake like this man. Always and everywhere, we find that he was perfect. Before Abraham was, I am. He affirmed his own omnipotence. He said that he was the only adequate Saviour - the rightful judge.

If you take any word that Jesus spoke from first until last - you can consider any subject. And you think again about these amazing words, "Come unto me all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give ye rest." How absurd these words would be on any other lips than his.

What about the amazing words - I am the light of the world. What does Christ here say - he says here that he is the light that the world needs. Even all the people, of all the countries, throughout the ages of time. He says that he has the answer to all of their questions. He has the explanation to all of their questions and mysteries - what kind of a God have we. Phillip cries, "show us the Father. And Jesus answered, have I been so long a time with you - and yet, hast thou not known me Phillip. He that hath seen me hath seen the Father."

We have the question - what are the relationships between man and God. And Jesus would say, "there is one mediator between God and men." Himself, man, Christ Jesus. What is the proper relation between man and man. In Christ alone, we find the answer. What about the great beyond. "If a man dies - shall he live again," Who will answer that question for you.? Is death an eternal sleep.? Or is it a passage to a land that is perfect. The only answer that we can find about life beyond is given by Christ. In him, we have the answer.

Third, look at his works. Now Paul might have said - not only listen to his words but look at his works. Believe me for my works sake - a tree is known by its fruit. This is, a test, that no man can deny. What then shall he say of Christ's works - from the cradle to the grave. We find this - the shepherds came to salute him as a king. The wisemen came with rich gifts. And when he was a boy of 12 years of age, he went in the Temple, and answered the questions of the learned men. As a young man, he patiently worked at a bench, teaching us how we need to be serious about our divine mission in life. Three short years of his public ministry, wherever he went, he had only to speak. The winds obeyed him. The storms were quieted, at his command. Demons fled from the afflicted people. Loaves and fishes were used and multiplied they feed thousands of hungry people. We find that Jesus, in the short years of his public

ministry, managed all of these blessed works.

Third, Paul could have said - look at his character. There he stands without sin. Which of you convinceth me of sin. He could have asked. He could have put that question to his friends or to his foes.

Pilate - I find no fault in him. Look at him as the son of man. As it is all summed up in the meekness which he possessed. You could look to Moses - but Moses wouldn't be the best example. You'd have to look to Jesus, for patience. You could look to Job - but for the best example, you would look to Jesus. You could look to Solomon for wisdom. For perfect wisdom, you would turn to Jesus. Who spake as never a man spake. What a great example of compassion we could turn to Jeremiah but Jesus would be the perfect one who wept over the city of Jerusalem. For zeal, we could look to Paul - but Jesus certainly would take first place. For love, we could look to John - but Jesus loved us sinners, thou we are, as he layed down his life for us.

There are some folks who talk about their inability to believe in miracles. But the question is, what will they do with Jesus? What will we do with the miracles of Jesus. He was born as a Jew in Bethlehem - many years ago. And he is the Saviour - and we put our trust in him. And Paul says he will forgive your sins.

There was Mozart that brought down angels with his music. Or Beethoven. That lifted up our souls. Now Jesus does more than these men. He is God's way to man. He is man's way to God. He is the true Jacob's ladder - he is the way for us.

Is there (anybody) or (anything) in Jesus to cause us shame.

If we were to pause for a moment and take our stand beside Jesus Christ. We believe in his supernatural birth. His absolute deity, his death of sinners, his bodily resurrection, and his personal return, and in his own time - without sin unto salvation. Now with Paul, we would rejoice and commit ourselves to him asking for nothing more in this world or in the world to come.

Paul was not ashamed of Christ's Gospel.

What it is - and does for mankind.

It is the power of God unto Salvation to everyone that believeth.

Now it is not hard to understand why false Gospels should have their followers throughout the earth. But if you mark the nature and the purpose for the Gospel of Christ, and its high and holy requirement, and you compare it with all of the false Gospels, those that appeal to you in the carnal and in the flesh - the Gospel of Christ will win every time.

Mohammedanism has a large following. Well, it is consecrated to Despotism and Polygamy and Slavery.

Now Christianity is consecrated to liberty, and freedom. And Christianity is consecrated to Monogamy. And to abolish slavery, to break off the shackles of every human being. So the Gospel of Christ has the highest challenge. Sin must be repented of. Put away. There is room in Christ's kingdom for the man who repents. For the man who believes in Christ - who is born again. The high demand of Christ is - that a man repent.

In 1809 a skeptic boasted that in another 100 years, there would not be a single Bible left in all the world. Save those that were kept in museums. And yet, since he made that prophecy, there are thousands more Bibles in circulation today in the world, than at any time we have ever known. They have been printed and scattered like leaves across this earth.

Another skeptic a generation ago, went up and down the land, charging men a dollar a head to hear his lecture. He sought to pull down the temple of Christianity. And yet the very spot where he sat and wrote, and polished his addresses, against religion - there has stood a house of worship. And thousands of persons have gone there to bow down before Christ.

Truth, forever on the scaffold
Wrong, forever on the throne
But that scaffold swags the future
And behind the dim unknown.

Standeth Christ within the shadows
Keeping watch above his own.

Now another question is for the night, in this service, do we need a new Gospel with which to win this sinning world. Almost daily, we have publications and booklets come out by people, entitled the new religion. Or, something fantastic that somebody believes they have just discovered. And we hail these things with a trumpet. Why, people go to the bookstores and immediately buy these things up. These publications - sometimes there are courses offered.

But when we look at these things, we discover that there is really nothing new about it. The author has borrowed something from the Greek philosophers. And it is just as dry as the desert.

Carlyle was right when he called all such Gospels - the Gospels of dirt.

There was no dynamic or redeeming salvation, in any of the Gospels. They were mere ethics.

And when you cast away the redeeming and the regenerative power - Christ crucified is the power of God in winning the world to him. The unbearable yoke upon men is sin. And the primary tragedy of the world is not ignorance - it is really not poverty. It is not poor wages. But the great tragedy in the world today is sin. Men have a fundamental need of a saviour, a redeemer from sin.

Now Paul said for the Jews, require a sign. And the Greeks seek after wisdom.

But we preach Christ crucified. Unto the Jews a stumbling block. Unto the Greeks foolishness - but unto them that are called both Jews and Greeks, Christ, the power of God and the wisdom of God.

Now when we begin to understand this - we will be like Paul. He shouts, God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ. By whom the world is crucified, unto me and I unto the world.

I like what Isaac Watts wrote -- when I survey the wonderful cross. On which the prince of glory died. My richest gain, I count by lost. And pour contempt on all of my pride.

Forbid it Lord that I should boast, save in the cross of Christ my God, all the vain things that charm me most, I sacrifice them to thy blood.

See from his head, his hands, his feet - sorrow and love flow mingled down, did ever such love and sorrow meet, or thorns compose so rich a crown.

Were the whole realm of nature mine, that were a present far too small, love so amazing so divine, demands my soul, my life, my all.

There is no ethical system or promoters of religion in the world, that could produce men like William Cary, or Judson, or Livingston, if they had an eternity to do it in - they would never do it. We cannot apply the glowing words, the power of God

unto salvation, to any Gospel except the Gospel of Christ.

We need to repeat that over and over again. What every Gospel denies or obscures the incarnation and the death, and the resurrection of Jesus - was not, never was, or ever will be, a religion of conquering power. Paul keeps us at the central and at the vital point.

Paul says, "for I delivered unto you, first of all, that which I also received. How that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures. How that he was buried and rose again the third day, according to the Scriptures."

This is a wonderful statement about the glorious Gospel. That wherever it went, Christ died for sin, and he arose again. The grave was empty. And this, Paul was witnessing too - and he wanted to go to Rome to preach it.

There is such a great temptation for men today. To get away from the central content of the Gospel in our preaching.

It is such a temptation today, for men to take up the (current trends) of things, and deal with politics or deal with something else. And this is just like a scrap of paper - it is superficial. It will not stretch out into eternity.

It fails because it is not the preaching of God's book. Did you know we are not primarily social agitators. Or social reformers!

We must hold fast to the fundamental content, of the Gospel of Christ. The primary thing for all men is that they must be born again. And when men are born again - it is as natural as the sunrise. For them to bear fruit. And part of it is going to be to praise God. It is just like pruning a tree in the orchard - we expect fruit in due season. Now we can go off on ethics and social services, and these other things.

But deep down in the hearts of men, there is this longing for peace. For enduring peace. And the great mediator between man and man is Jesus Christ.

I like that story of the old art gallery where an old man was gazing at a picture of the thorn crowned Christ. And expression broke from his lips -- bless him, I love him. A stranger standing nearby heard the old man's words. And took him by the hand, brother, I love him too. And then a third, and a fourth, and still others. And there they were in a common love for the crucified Lord. That is a parable of prophesy. What will come to pass when Christ's love is shed abroad in the hearts of men around this world.

This Gospel is a Gospel that won Paul - the self-righteous man. Peter. And it won Augustine. It won George Mueller. And no man can number - it has won Indians, and people in China. And across this world. The Gospel of Christ is the one adequate remedy for every need and condition of mankind. And it is sufficient in its explanation of God unto salvation.

Now this last thought - the Gospel can be tested. You can prove the Gospel - and there is one way you can prove it - (by experience). It is the power of God to everyone that believes. So the test is a personal experience. Paul could say, and you and I can say, according to my Gospel. His call is to come and see. His challenge is, if any man

willeth, to do the will of God, he shall know of the teaching whether it be of God. Now a scientist looks for the (facts) - but a Christian man looks for an experience. It causes a man to be able to go on his way, and say - one thing I know, that whereas I was blind, now I see.

The Christ of human experience awakens and enlightens, and demonstrates in us, that every need can be met.

The vital question now is - for you. What is your personal relations to Christ? Do you have an adequate Gospel? Are you a friend of Christ's? Jesus said, ye are my friends if you do whatsoever I command you. Are we obeying Christ. Do we delight in his service. Are our lives consistent. And victorious as his witnesses - and as fellow workers, with Christ.

A traveler once went to Edinburg and stood in an old grave yard. And historic Grey Friars Church. It was that open church yard, centuries ago, that a multitude of dedicated men signed the national covenant. The old era of Southerland himself leading the way. As you gaze upon them, that day, do you see what they are doing. They are opening the veins in their own arms, and signing the coventant with their own blood. And shall Christ's people redeemed by his own blood - hesitate for one moment, to dedicate upon Him their very talent, time, and money, and love, and lives - all that they have. For today, tomorrow, and beyond forever.

Now, what should we say to the person who is (ashamed) of Christ? Can it be that there is one person who hears today who is ashamed. How can you be ashamed of him.

After all, he has done so much and continues to do - how can you reject him and disobey him.

Remember, you must do something with Christ. You must do one of two things. You must accept him as your personal Saviour. Or you just reject him. You must confess him or deny him. You must be for him or against him. There is no third course! You need to trust and rely on him.

There is a hymn which says Jesus -