

Bibles???

The Word of God is the Absolute Truth and the Final Authority

Turn your bibles with me to the book of Romans 1

We are continuing our verse-by-verse study through this amazing letter that the Apostle Paul wrote to the believers in Rome.

And as I mentioned at the start of the study two weeks ago – this book transforms the life of the believer.

Because it brings us back to the reality of what the gospel of grace is.

I told everyone here that the Book of Romans is probably the deepest theological book in the New Testament

And for the past two weeks, we have only looked at Paul's introduction of who he is and his motivation for writing this letter.

Now, we are going to get to the meat.

Paul is going to wrap up the gospel in two verses.

Let's pray...

Read Text – repeat after me.

[Rom 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."

AMEN

In these two verses – we have

The source of the gospel – God

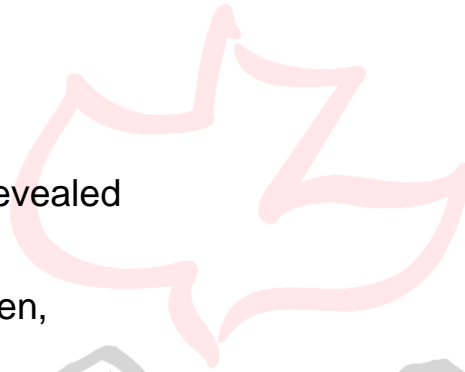
The nature of the gospel – power

The purpose of the gospel – salvation

The scope of the gospel – everyone

The efficiency of the gospel – the righteousness of God is revealed

The outcome of the gospel – the just shall live by faith



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These two verses are the heart and soul of the book of Romans

And the reason that I say this is because every single word that Paul writes from this point forward – from verse 18 until the end of chapter 16 –

Everything we are going to study for the next 18 months

It serves to explain and expand on these two verses.

[Rom 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.

For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ

Though Paul suffered much for the Gospel's sake, he knew he was called by God and set apart by God to deliver the Good News wherever he went.

And Paul did just that.

And when Paul preached, there were two basic reactions to the gospel

Some believed and others rejected.

Among those who rejected the message of the gospel, most of them simply turned away and were disinterested, but there were a few that became hostile and determined to make life miserable for Paul.

All Paul had to do to avoid the ridicule and suffering that his enemies heaped on him was to stop proclaiming the gospel.

But that was never an option for Paul.

Even as the angry mobs gathered to tear him apart, Paul saw them as another group to preach the gospel to.

What was Paul's motivation to preach the gospel?

Paul understood that the source of the gospel is God Himself

Repentance is a divine gift.

[Act 11:18 NKJV] 18 When they heard these things (concerning the gentiles) **they became silent; and they glorified God, saying, "Then God has also granted to the Gentiles repentance to life."**

The gospel finds its origin in the heart of God and the will of God.

The gospel was prepared before the foundation of the earth.

The gospel is not something that man made up.

It was created, it was authenticated, planned by God

The reason Paul was not ashamed to preach the Gospel of Christ was because he knew it was nothing less than the power of God to accomplish salvation.

Paul realized that the same power of God demonstrated in creation is now applied in accomplishing our salvation.

No wonder Paul wasn't ashamed of sharing it!

So what if some mocked & rejected him?

He knew there would always be some who'd come to faith & be forever transformed.

Now, since Paul knew that the gospel was nothing less than the power of God to accomplish salvation – let's talk about salvation.

Salvation is used in the Bible to describe God's action for us because that's what it is – a Rescue of His people from danger.

To bring to deliverance

In the Old Testament we see salvation when God brings the Children of Israel out of Egypt and into the Promised Land

The word that is used for salvation then is a word that means: to bring into a spacious place.

And that is exactly what God did.

But there is another Hebrew word that is used in the Old Testament for salvation and it is a word that means to redeem.

It speaks of recovering something that's fallen into enemy hands.

The kinsman-redeemer, is one of the titles for the Messiah, Whose mission is to save or redeem His people.

So, salvation was a concept that grew in the OT to mean God's action in history to rescue His people from the Fall.

To liberate them from bondage to sin & death

And bring them into a place where all that was lost in the Fall is restored.

The end result of salvation is complete wholeness & untroubled peace.

When salvation is complete, all threat of danger is past.

Now, think about his as we consider what Paul says here.

The gospel of Christ is the power of God to salvation.

What Jesus did at the Cross & thru His resurrection accomplishes our salvation; all of it, from beginning to end.

- It paid our debt of sin.
- It provides the power we need to live a new life.
- And it guarantees our final entrance into the glory of heaven.

In the NT, salvation has 3 tenses: Past, Present, & Future.

Past - Jesus HAS SAVED us from the penalty of sin. – Justification

Present - He IS SAVING us from the power of sin by the work of the Holy Spirit. –

Sanctification. This is something that is happening right now in the very presence of our hearts.

Future – He WILL SAVE us from the presence of sin when He takes us to heaven.

– Glorification

Paul says all God's power is involved in this 3-fold work of salvation.

Past, present and future.

Now – consider this . . .

How much of our assistance did God need to save us from the penalty of sin?

None!

He did it all.

All we need to do to receive forgiveness is believe Jesus died for us.

How much assistance does He need to save us from the presence of sin when He takes us to heaven?

None –

He'll do it all.

All we need to do is keep believing to the end.

.....

But - Here is the one that gets us.

So why do we think that now, while we're being saved from the power of sin, He needs our assistance?

Is His power somehow less capable of dealing with our present than our past and our future salvation?

No!

It's all the same power.

So why do we think our sanctification, our being delivered from the power of sin into the image of Christ is up to us?

Why do we think the key to spiritual growth is making resolutions to be better?

I need to do this, I need to do that

Why do we think the key to spiritual growth is "I just have to try harder"

Or that our spiritual growth requires devoting ourselves to a rigorous lifestyle of hard discipline. (following a list of do's and don'ts)

Church – please understand this

Our sanctification occurs the same way our justification & glorification comes – by faith, not works, not self-effort!

Look at verse 16 –

I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes.

Paul doesn't say – for it is the power of God to salvation

For everyone who works really really hard to earn it

For everyone who proves themselves by doing good works

For everyone who reads 10 chapters a day, prays for 3 hours, double tithes, signs up for 5 ministries at their church, never misses a meeting, & goes on at least one short term mission trip every year.

No – Paul says For everyone who believes (faith)

That is the gospel – that is the good news

The gospel contains all the inherent power that is contained in the God who conceived it

In other words – the gospel is the plan that God has orchestrated to bring us to a place of redemption and forgiveness and reconciliation.

It is not something that man has made up

It is the ability of God to really forgive us and really cleanse us and really reconcile us.

Remember, the gospel means good news – not good advice

The gospel is not a suggestion on how to have a happy life.

It's an announcement about what IS, about the change that's occurred because of what Jesus did.

So when Paul says in -

[2Co 5:17 NKJV] 17 Therefore, if anyone [is] in Christ, [he is] a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new.

Guess what? that's a Fact!

It means everything we read in the Bible about the way we ought to live, the way we ought to be, we can in reality have right now!

It doesn't matter what's happened in our past, or how we "feel" about it.

Because of what Jesus did on that cross & thru the resurrection we've been given a new identity.

We've entered into a new relationship with God that sees all His power made available to help us walk in the reality of who and what we are now in Christ.

Turn to John 15

I think this verse will help us understand what John is saying here in Rom 1:16

[Jhn 15:1-4 NKJV] 1 “I am the true vine, and My Father is the vinedresser. 2 “Every branch in Me that does not bear fruit He takes away; and every [branch] that bears fruit He prunes, that it may bear more fruit. 3 “You are already clean because of the word which I have spoken to you. 4 “Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in Me.

The power we need to live the Christian life isn't from us! It's His resurrected life
IN us.

And that life flows to us when we simply abide in Him, when we trust in Him.

Real spiritual growth comes from an abiding faith in Christ that puts us in such close fellowship with Him - it's His life that animates us.

[Gal 2:20 NKJV] 20 “I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the [life] which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me.

So that means that is there is sin in my life that need to be overcome,

It's not going to be my effort to conquer it that's going to do it,

It's going to be His victory over all sin at the cross that defeats the power of that sin in my life.

If there's a virtue I need to install in my character,

Love, holiness, peace

It's not going to be my effort at being a better person that's going to accomplish it.

It's going to be the power of Christ's resurrected life in me that produces that virtue.

The proof Christ has affected His salvation in me over that sin & implanting that virtue is that I'll not stumble in that sin and I will consistently bear the good fruit of that virtue.

The evidence of me trying to do it on my own - by my effort to overcome sin & be a better person is that I will keep struggling and never really change.

But Paul says that the good news is freely given to everyone who believes –

And he adds here at the end of verse 16, to the Jew first and then the Greek

Now, as we study this letter – this is something that Paul is going to repeat.

So whenever, we read this, we have to understand that Paul is speaking chronologically and not exclusively.

The gospel came to the Jew first

The gospel was promised through the Jewish prophets in the Old Testament, in Jewish scriptures, to a Jewish nation, with a Jewish context about a Jewish Messiah but it was intended for the whole world.

This is the same thing that we find Jesus telling the Samaritan woman.

[Jhn 4:22 NKJV] 22 "You worship what you do not know; we know what we worship, for salvation is of the Jews.

Jesus didn't mean that it is exclusive to the Jews

Jesus simply meant that it came to the Jews first - chronologically

The first believers were Jewish

The Apostles were Jewish

The Jews categorized mankind into two categories, Jews and non Jews
(Gentiles/Greeks)

The Greeks, as we saw last week categorized everyone into either Greek or Barbarian

What Paul is saying here is the gospel he preaches is a nondiscriminatory gospel

It is good for Greeks and non-Greeks

It is good for Jews and nonJews.

It is freely given to anyone who believes.

17 For in it (the “it” is regarding the gospel) the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith; as it is written, "The just shall live by faith."

Here Paul answers the question –

What does the gospel do?

It reveals the righteousness of God

In what way?

It provides a right standing before God to those who trust God from beginning to end

We accept Christ by faith and we continue to live our Christian lives by faith.

Now, regarding the word righteousness

It means coming to God according to God’s terms.

We don’t come to God on our terms – we can only come before God on His terms.

The bible says that God is Holy

And that He can’t be approached on the basis of sin and disobedience

Some people argue and say, “Well, I can approach God on my terms”

“I am a good person most of the time”

“I make mistakes – just like everyone else – I am human.”

But according to the scriptures, righteousness in God's eyes is perfection.

Which should lead us to the conclusion that no one can come to God.

There is one person who can approach God on the basis of purity and holiness and perfection – and that is the person of Jesus

And that is the whole point of the gospel

The gospel allows people like me and people like you to approach God, not on the basis of what we have and or on the basis of what we haven't done,

not on the basis of our wickedness and sin or even on the basis of what we think we have done right.

The gospel allows us to approach God on the basis of what Jesus has done.

The righteousness God requires isn't self-manufactured, it's not our rightness; it's HIS!

That's what the Gospel announces—that when we put our trust in Christ, God's righteousness is attributed to us.

[2Co 5:21 NKJV] 21 For He made Him who knew no sin [to be] sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.

At the cross, Jesus took our sin on Himself & paid its ugly debt, breaking the power of sin in our lives forever.

In exchange for our sin, He gave us His own perfect righteousness.

This is exactly what happened to Martin Luther –

He spent many days fasting, praying, & studying trying to purge his mind & heart of the tormenting sense God was poised to squash him for his sins.

The more he tried to gain God's favor, the worst it got.

And the Holy Spirit brings verse 17 to his remembrance

He was able to grasp that the righteousness God requires isn't something he could produce by his own works.

The only righteousness that satisfies God is perfect righteousness, His OWN righteousness, which He gives to those who live by faith in Christ.

He suddenly realized all his anguish and efforts to make himself acceptable to God were really a gross rejection of God's grace.

The whole time he thought he was proving his desire to please God, Luther was in fact insulting Him by rejecting His salvation and trying to save himself.

Martin Luther came to the conclusion that those who are justified by faith, saved by faith, kept by faith and continue in faith – then guess what?

That means that religious rules and list of do's and don't's and rituals can't be the source of forgiveness and redemption.

And Paul ends verse 17 – while quoting Habakkuk ch 2

The just shall live by faith.

And Paul reminds us that salvation by grace through faith has always been God's plan.

As I mentioned before – this is the theme to the book of Romans

[Rom 10:17 NKJV] 17 So then faith [comes] by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.

Faith isn't simply believing something absent of evidence

Our faith is not a blind faith.

On the contrary, faith rests on the best evidence – the Word of God

The moment that someone hears the truth about Jesus, the life of Jesus, the love of Jesus, the sacrifice of Jesus – there is something that wells up inside the human heart

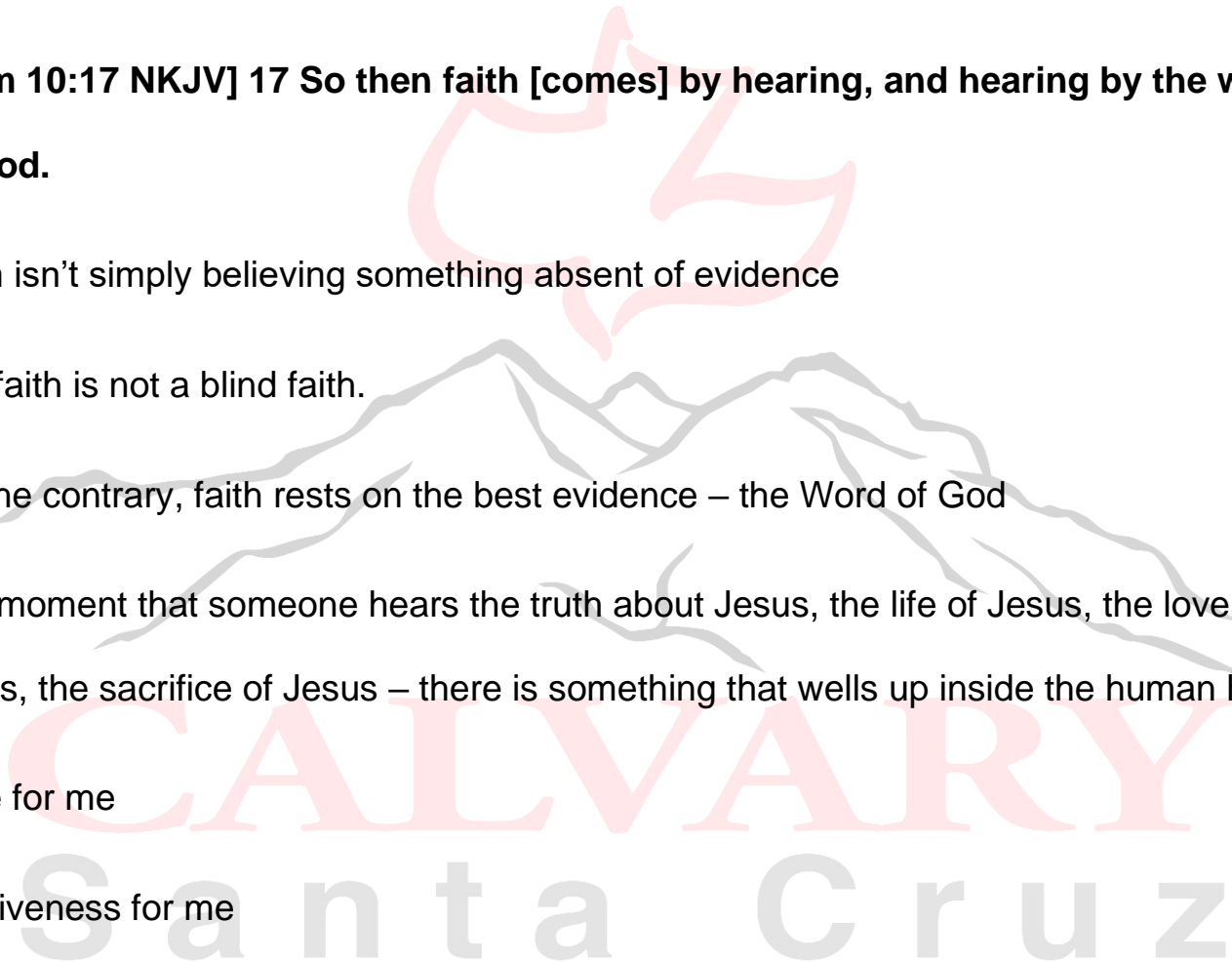
Love for me

Forgiveness for me

Hope for me

Faith is something that has to be believed

Faith is something that has to be embraced



It is possible for someone to ask the question – can God save me?

But that doesn't constitute salvation.

Because at some point we have to believe that He can save us and that He will save us.

That is faith

There is a beautiful illustration that I heard one time – of a fire that happened in the middle of the night in a small town –

Everyone ran out of the house as fast they could – and when they were out, the father realized that his 5 year old son was still in the house –

The father knew it was too late to run back in the home –

He could see his son by the window rubbing his eyes because of all the smoke

And the he could hear his son cry out to him – save me!

And the father yells at him, “Jump, I will catch you”

The son responds – but I can't see you – as he continued to rub his eyes

And the father said, Son, that is ok I can see you. Jump. I will catch you.

The boy jumped, and he was safe in the father's arms.

The boy had faith, because he heard the voice of his father

But when he jumped – he made a commitment.

Everyone of us can hear the voice of God crying out to us

And we can hear the invitation of Jesus appealing to us

But at some point, we are all going to have to jump.

Amen

Let's pray...

To Receive Christ do the following:

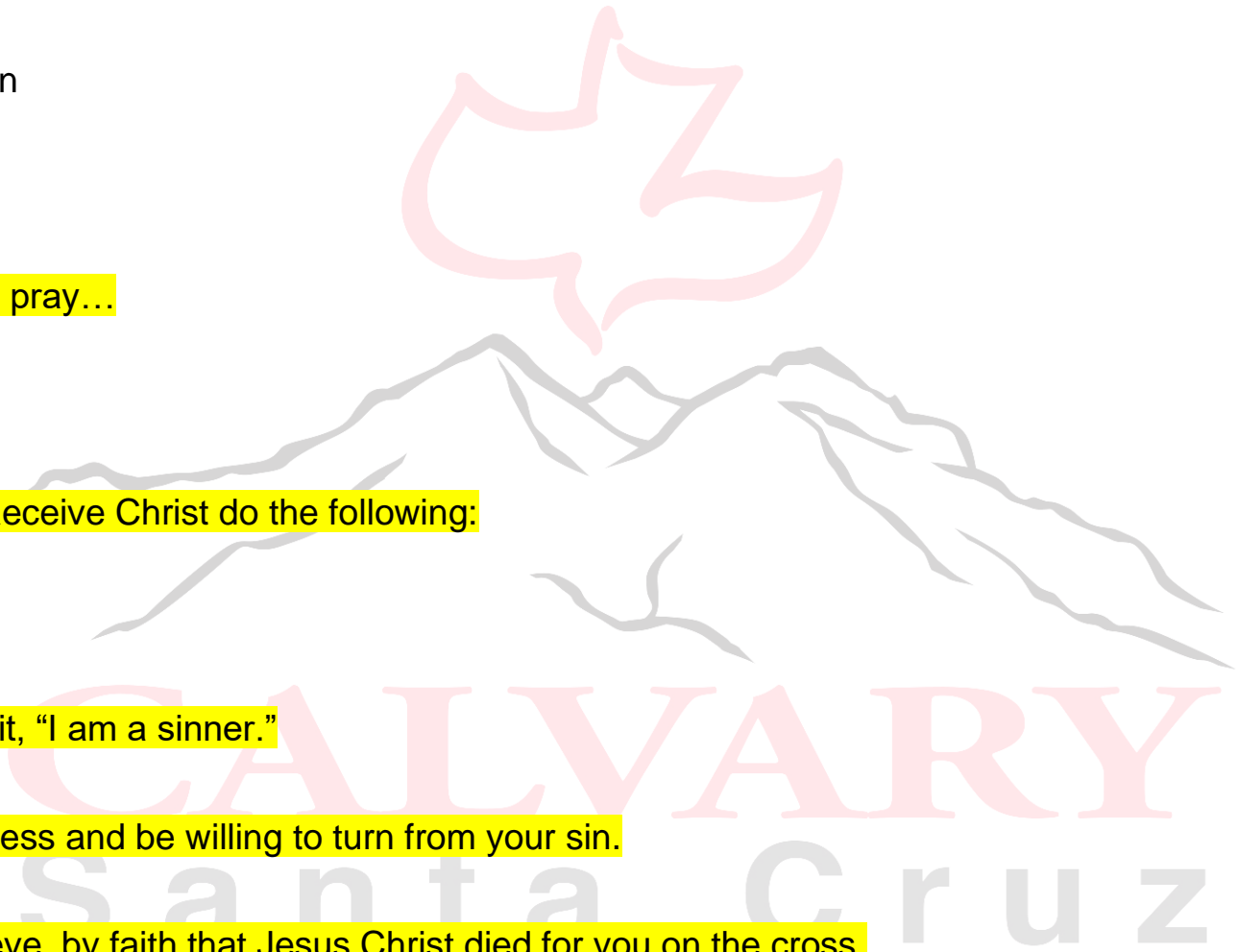
Admit, "I am a sinner."

Confess and be willing to turn from your sin.

Believe, by faith that Jesus Christ died for you on the cross.

Receive, through prayer, Jesus Christ into your heart and receive eternal life.

Dear Lord Jesus,



I know that I am a sinner and need Your forgiveness. I believe that You died on the cross for my sins. Please forgive me for my sins and cleanse me by Your blood. I accept You by faith as my personal Lord and Savior. Give me a thirst for Your Word and Help me to follow You all of my days. In Jesus' name I pray, Amen.

[Num 6:24-26 NLT] 24 '

May the LORD bless you and protect you.

May the LORD smile on you and be gracious to you.

May the LORD show you his favor and give you his peace.!



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