

Guest Preacher Rev. George Macaskill

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Preacher: Rev. George Macaskill

[0 : 00] Now, let's read again verse 16. Romans chapter 1, verse 16. Paul speaking.

Why he wants to preach in Rome. For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek.

For I am not ashamed of the gospel. Now, why would anyone be ashamed of the gospel?

Well, just think about it. Just think about how it sounds to an irreligious person, to someone that has no church background whatsoever.

Just think about the gospel story. A carpenter's son claims to be God. But he ends up being crucified.

[1 : 21] And then he rises from the dead and becomes Lord of the whole universe. And anyone, anywhere, anytime, who believes in him will have their lives changed forever.

Now, as I said, to the irreligious public. That story just seems fanciful.

To the irreligious. If you take it seriously, you can lose your job over it nowadays. But what about the irreligious person?

Well, any guru claiming divine power who ends up being crucified. Well, that's a contradiction in terms.

If you can't look after his own life, how can you save my life? That's the religious guru. But here's Paul the apostle.

[2 : 32] Under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. And he says, I am not ashamed of the gospel. For it's the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes.

And Paul is really not ashamed of it. He says, Fast forward in his life. And he's in prison.

Confined. For preaching the gospel. And he writes a letter to the church at Colossae. And in chapter 4, verse 3, you can check up afterwards.

Chapter 4, verse 3, he says to the church. Now look, I want you to pray for one thing. I want you to pray for an open door for me.

Okay? What's the open door he asks the church to pray for? Is it an open door so he'll get out of prison? Well, read it.

[3 : 43] What does he say? An open door that I may preach boldly. Boldly. He's landed in prison for preaching.

And he says, pray that the door will open. So that I can preach the gospel with even more boldness. Why does he say that when it landed in prison? Because he's not ashamed of the gospel.

Fast forward to the end of Paul's life. We know now, when he wrote 2 Timothy, he was writing his last letter.

Certainly, the last letter that's part of the canon of Scripture. He's writing to his successor, Timothy. What does he say to Timothy? He's at the end of his life. He's spent his life preaching the gospel.

[4 : 54] He's been scourged five times. Five times. Scourged. What was scourging?

Scourging was whipping with a rope, with little pieces of steel or bone at the end. So they'd lacerate his back. And do you notice how the Scripture defines scourging?

It doesn't say 39 lashes. It says 40 minus 1. Isn't that interesting?

Why does it not just say 39 lashes? 40 minus 1. You see, at the 40th last of the scourge, a man could die.

But the Romans wanted the person they were scourging to have the most painful thing and live. They weren't to die.

[6 : 00] They were to live painfully. You would think when that happened once for preaching the gospel that Paul would say, that's enough.

I'll take great care. I don't do that again. Five times. He's been scourged for preaching the gospel. What does he say to his successor? What does he write to Timothy in his second letter to Timothy? Does he say, Timothy, take care.

Take good care. Does he say, Timothy, be very, very careful how you preach his gospel? Is that what he says? No, no, no, no. What does he say? He says, Timothy, preach the word in season and out of season.

Why does he say that? Because Paul is not ashamed of the gospel. Now, Paul was no moron. [7 : 14] Paul was no rookie. Those who study his life tell us that by the time he was 21, by the time he was 21, he had the equivalent of today's PhDs.

He had two PhDs by the time he was 21. Well, well educated man. Highly, highly intelligent.

That's a man that's saying, I'm not ashamed of the gospel. We're not talking here about some misguided, deranged psychopath who's got a huge chip on his shoulder about something.

Highly intelligent, well educated man. Not ashamed of the gospel. I'm ashamed of myself.

Are you? How we get easily embarrassed or ashamed just because we're in a minority. what a, what an example Paul is to we Christians not ashamed of this gospel.

[8 : 34] Now, we ask, why? Why is Paul not ashamed of the gospel? And why should you and I not be ashamed of the gospel?

number one, the gospel is true. The gospel is real.

The gospel is facts. Christianity is about truth. It's about reality.

it's not a hobby. It's a credible, authentic worldview. And if there was anybody that was a dyed in the wool religious bigot, it was Saul of Tarsus.

This man we're speaking about who was the great apostle Paul. At one time, a religious dyed in the wool bigot who was a Judean and who thought it was his duty to exterminate the Christian religion.

[9 : 55] And he believed Christ was an imposter. But like everybody else, until he met him. Until he met him.

I think I've probably mentioned here before Christopher Morley, the English poet, an atheist. And he said, I had a million questions to ask God until I met him.

And all the, when I did meet him, all the questions fled from my mind. And the questions didn't matter. The questions didn't matter.

which leads us to the second reason why Paul is not ashamed of the gospel. Not simply because it's true and factual, but because it's relevant.

Oh, how relevant the gospel is to everyone. As we've said already, it's about reality. It's about the meaning of life.

[11 : 00] life. It's about life after death. Don't say that's not relevant. It's about the supernatural.

It's about the next world. Have you ever seen, ever seen a map of, of the universe? The galaxies. We're just one galaxy. I think I've told the story here before to the kids. James Irwin, who was the second man on the moon, to put his feet on him, the second man, going up in his spacecraft, he saw the world the size of a football.

And a couple of days later, he saw the world the size of a tennis ball. and finally looked up his wee, out his wee window, and he couldn't find the world.

He couldn't find it. Ah, then he saw it. A wee, wee speck, away in the distance. My friend, there's more worlds than this one.

[12 : 21] and you and I are going to the eternal world. And the gospel is extremely relevant. It's true.

It's relevant. But there's something else. And that's the words of our text. Paul is not ashamed of the gospel.

Not just because it's true. Not just because it's oh so relevant. He believes, not ashamed of the gospel, because the gospel has power.

You see, what's the point of a tremendous message that can make all the difference in your life. If it's true, if it's appropriate and relevant, but it's got no power to change you.

But the gospel's different. The gospel has power to change your life, to transform you into a new creature.

[13 : 33] And the explanation of that word, of that gospel, as the gospel is proclaimed, the proclamation of the gospel, power goes out with it to transform lives, to make black, guilty, unworthy sinners, to change them like they changed the apostle Paul.

As I said already, Paul was a dyed-in-the-wool religious bigot, believing in the Judaism and believing that this Christ claiming to be God, he was just an imposter. But once he met him on the Damascus road, we read he went off to Arabia. I think most people believe it's for three years, three years to study all his two PhDs. What I learned over these years at the feet of Gamaliel, were they real? What does it say about this man? And he changed his mind when he studied it. This Jesus Christ really is God. and he came in the flesh and he did die on a cross. [15:01] He was crucified, but not like the other two thieves. He was wounded for our transgressions. He was bruised for our iniquities.

The chastisement of our peace was on him. He paid for it all. He believed it and it changed him. And he says, I am not ashamed of the gospel.

So it's time to ask, isn't it, what is this gospel? Where do we start?

Where do we start? Well, how about starting where Paul started? how about starting where the Bible starts?

Next verse, verse 18, two verses further on. For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men.

[16:12] that's where Paul starts proclaiming the gospel. Starting with the wrath of God, not the love of God.

Now, listen, the love of God is the truest, most powerful aspect of the gospel. people, but is that the most sensible place to start when you're evangelizing?

To say to someone, God loves you? And they say, well, why did my wife die? Why did I lose my child?

Why have I lost my job? Is that where Paul started? Listen, nobody preached the love of God more than Paul, but it's not where he started.

You see, it is true God is love. That is vitally true. That's why we're still alive. But it's not the only thing that's true about God.

[17:22] God is holy. And God is angry with the wicked every day.

And he's angry with the wicked every day because he's holy. Think about it.

If he let the wicked off, that doesn't mean he's holy. If he lets the wicked off, he doesn't keep his word.

God has sworn sin must be punished with death. He must.

And he, God is unchangeably holy. If God said, oh, I want that person in heaven, but I've sworn I haven't.

[18:23] Everyone who sins must be punished for it. How can we get them to heaven? if he said, oh, let's just forget about it. That's not holiness.

That's having no principles, having no standards. That's going back on your word. God can't do that. Listen, God cannot overlook sin.

sin. He cannot change his mind about sin. Sin must be punished.

So how come sinners can get to heaven? That's the question. That's where the gospel comes in. I speak reverently in the councils of a past eternity when God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit, when they discussed salvation, what was the issue?

We can't speak about a problem because God has no problems, but there was an issue to overcome. How can we keep our word about punishing sin and take these sinners to heaven with us?

[19:57] And that is why Christ is called the wisdom of God. Punishing Christ instead the sinners who will be in heaven.

That is the gospel. That's what God did. That's how God puts out the anger against sinners who will be in heaven.

He's angry with all ungodliness and unrighteousness. ungodliness and unrighteousness.

It's just a lifestyle without God and without righteousness. It's just doing your own thing. Keeping God out of your life.

That's ungodliness. And verse 18 tells us the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness.

[21:22] God chose to punish his son Christ instead of the sinners who will be in heaven. And God accepted the sacrifice, the crucifixion of his own son as a punishment for those who will be in

heaven.

So, what is the gospel? I've just explained the background. That's the background. That's the starting point. What is the gospel?

The gospel is a genuine offer from God to every soul everywhere who hears it, irrespective of background or behavior, a genuine offer of instant forgiveness of sins, past, present, future. Have you got that? God in Christ here now is offering every single one of us instant forgiveness of all our sins, past, present, and future.

He's offering it to us now by repenting of our past and believing Christ's sacrifice was enough.

[23 : 08] God is satisfied with it. Surely we must be. That's the gospel. That's the gospel.

The gospel is an announcement that God is reconciled to sinners through Christ by repenting and believing in Christ.

What is there to be ashamed of? What is there to be ashamed of? I'm ashamed of myself. Nothing to be ashamed of in the gospel.

It's life changing. everything has been done. We only need to receive it. We only need to believe it, as I try to say to the children.

It's so simple as confusing us. We only need to follow Christ. God punished his son, Christ, on the cross, instead of the guilty sinners that will be in heaven.

[24 : 31] And he now offers instant pardon through faith in him. That's the gospel. And here's the amazing thing.

Maybe there's somebody, is this online? I think it is. Yeah. Maybe there's somebody listening on their deathbed.

Never get, never get out of bed again. You've spent your life in sin. And you say, well, I realize now I was meant to honor God with my life.

I cannot glorify him now. I'm at the end of the night. I've only days maybe hours to live. I can't glorify him.

I can't get out of bed. How can he glorify him? Here's the wonderful thing about the gospel. A person believing in Christ for the first time glorifies God more by that act of faith in accepting Christ's death as an atonement for your sin.

[25 : 57] You glorify God more than if you kept the whole law of God perfectly all your life. That's wonderful.

That's the gospel. Isn't it hard to believe? You ask God to give you faith to believe it. God is more glorified by a sinner believing on his son's sacrifice for their sins than if that person had never sinned once.

God is more glorified and we were created to glorify God. Don't waste your life glorify God by believing on his son with all your heart and life and soul.

Now tell me as we finish do you understand why Paul is not ashamed of the gospel? Do you understand?

This gospel has inbuilt power to transform lives and societies and societies.

[27 : 27] It has inbuilt power to do it but only because Christ is in it died. And only because Christ died and only because Christ rose from the dead.

We read that. Verse 2 2 2 He's declared to be the Son of God in power according to the Spirit of Holiness by his resurrection resurrection from the dead.

But only if you believe. Only if you believe it. Believe it to the saving of your soul.

May God the Holy Spirit make his word effectual to every single one of us.

Let's bow our heads in prayer. Our gracious Father in heaven we bow our heads now and ask for your Holy Spirit who is present to take the things of Christ and make them ours binding us to your Son in that living vital faith that saves the soul.

[29 : 08] Hear us in mercy answer us in peace for we pray only in Christ's name and for Christ's sake.

Amen. we'll sing in conclusion to God's praise out of Psalm 73.

Psalm 73 in the Scottish Psalter version of your blue book. That's page 316. Page 316. Psalm 73 verses 25 to the end.

Psalm 73 25 whom have I in the heavens high but thee O Lord alone and in the earth whom I desire besides thee there is none.

I will sing to the last verse but surely it is good for me that I draw near to God in God I trust that all thy works I may declare abroad.

[30 : 27] Psalm 73 verse 25 whom have I in the heavens high whom have I in the heavens high but thee O Lord our Lord and in the earth whom I desire besides thee there is none.

My flesh and heart not not not fail but God not fail me never for of my heart God is the strength and portion forever for do they not are far from thee forever perish shall perish out let not the whore in from thee go thou hast destroyed all but surely it is good for me that

I draw near to God in God I trust that all thy words I may declare abroad the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with us all now and forever more amen