

Can You Boldly Say You Are "Not Ashamed of the Gospel"?

Clarence L. Haynes Jr. | Contributing Writer 2020 13 Dec



Photo credit: ©Getty Images/ipopba

The gospel or the good news is the reality that Christ came to this earth to pay the price for our sins. By putting your [faith](#) in him you not only have your sins forgiven but you are rewarded with eternal life. What a wonderful message that is – filled with hope, especially when you see the sinful condition the world is in. It's great to know this is not our eternal home.

Is there any wonder Paul, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, would write such an incredible statement such as this?

“For I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the power of God that brings salvation to everyone who believes: first to the Jew, then to the Gentile” ([Romans 1:16](#)).

Knowing what Paul said causes me to pause and ask a question, why are we not ashamed of the Gospel? Another question that comes to mind is should we be ashamed of the Gospel? I want you to consider with me these and other questions in light of the wonder and beauty of the Gospel.

What Does Paul Mean When He Says This?

Let's start here. What does Paul actually mean by this statement? When you define the word “ashamed” there are two definitions that are applicable in this verse.

1. Embarrassed or guilty because of one's actions, characteristics, or associations.
2. Reluctant to do something through fear of embarrassment or humiliation.

When you apply this definition it gives a nice framework to what Paul is really saying. Here is what Paul means: I am not embarrassed to be associated with the Gospel and I am not reluctant to proclaim the Gospel because of fear of humiliation. Not only is he not ashamed of the Gospel, he is proud to be associated or affiliated with the Gospel. He counts it an honor to be tied or connected to Jesus.

If that is what it means to not be ashamed then what does it mean to be ashamed of the Gospel? This is simply the opposite. It means that you shy away from identifying with or sharing the Gospel because you are worried about being tied to Jesus. This worry is based on fear of embarrassment or humiliation.

If you are going to be honest there have probably been times when you have been on both sides of this question – I know I have. There have been times when I was bold and courageous and not afraid to be identified with Christ. There have also been other times when I didn't even want anyone to know I was a follower of Christ for fear of embarrassment or humiliation. By the way if you have ever been ashamed of the Gospel, don't beat yourself up – you are in good company. Even the Apostle Peter was ashamed and denied his affiliation with Christ. I think you would agree he came out well on the other side of it.



Photo credit: ©[SparrowStock](#)

What Else Is Happening in Romans?

The book of Romans that Paul wrote to the church in Rome is a letter that is filled with great doctrine. Some books in the [Bible](#) are historical in nature – think of the books from Joshua through Esther in the Old Testament and Acts in the New Testament. Some are books of prophecy and then you have books of doctrine which highlight and define the key tenants and beliefs of the faith. Romans is one of those types of books.

[Chuck Swindoll](#) said this about the book of Romans, “The letter to the Romans stands as the clearest and most systematic presentation of Christian doctrine in all the Scriptures.” I

personally believe Romans is an essential book that every believer should study to really get a deeper understanding of what you believe.

Who Was Paul?

If you are not familiar with Paul's journey to Christ let's say this: there is no screenwriter in Hollywood that could have created a better story of Paul's conversion. Prior to his conversion he was Saul of Tarsus, a Pharisee. In fact, he was the Pharisee of Pharisees. Listen to his own words describing himself before he came to Christ.

"If someone else thinks they have reasons to put confidence in the flesh, I have more: circumcised on the eighth day, of the people of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of Hebrews; in regard to the law, a Pharisee; as for zeal, persecuting the church; as for righteousness based on the law, faultless" ([Philippians 3:4-6](#)).

If you notice in his description, he was not only zealous for the law, he was a persecutor of the early church. One of the first introductions to Saul is at the stoning of Stephen in [Acts 7](#). Even though Saul was zealous for the law, he had a reputation of someone to be feared because he was having Christians thrown in prison as well as executed. If you were a Christian in that day you were probably afraid of Saul. Yet it was this Saul who God met personally on the road to Damascus which changed his life forever. You can read about it in [Acts 9](#). From that conversion he went on to become a champion of the faith and an apostle to the Gentiles.

When you consider the zeal Saul displayed when he was a persecutor of the church, the boldness and persistence with which he went after the early church, is there any wonder why he would not be ashamed of the Gospel? [Romans 1:16](#) is simply a carryover from the passion and intensity he demonstrated before he was converted. In case you were wondering, he was called Saul and Paul but after conversion Paul was more frequently used. "Then Saul, who was also called Paul, filled with the Holy Spirit, looked straight at Elymas and said" ([Acts 13:9](#)).

One of the wonderful things about salvation is that while God changes your sinful nature, he will often leave or refocus some of the qualities you possess. He will redirect things like your drive, your passion, your natural skills and abilities in a direction that now honors him. That's why people who were great at something before they got saved still remain great after they get saved. God doesn't remove the skill, he retools it and uses it for his purpose and his glory. He did it with Paul and he does it with you as well.



Photo credit: ©Getty Images/digitalskillet

Why Should We Not Be Ashamed of the Gospel?

There are many reasons that I could possibly give you as to why you should not be ashamed of the gospel. I want to give you only one today. The reason you should not be ashamed is because Jesus was not ashamed to hang on a cross and die for you. I don't know how often you think about it, but Jesus' death was not only excruciating, it was shameful. Prior to him being nailed to a cross he was mocked, beaten, spit upon and stripped naked. Whatever dignity a man would have was completely stripped from him. Yet the Bible tells us why he did it and why you can be proud of what Jesus did for you. Consider these verses in Hebrews:

“Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles. And let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us, fixing our eyes on Jesus, the pioneer and perfecter of faith. For the joy set before him he endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. Consider him who endured such opposition from sinners, so that you will not grow weary and lose heart” ([Hebrews 12:1-3](#)).

Jesus endured the cross for the joy set before him. Part of that joy was knowing that his actions were winning redemption for you. Jesus went through the shame and humiliation of the cross just for you. When you understand what he endured for your salvation, this is the heartbeat of the gospel. He loved you so much that he could not leave you in your sinful condition and had to provide a way of redemption for you. Even at great personal cost to himself. Because of this there is great reason not only to be unashamed, but also to be extremely proud. If he would go through that for you and me then we should stand tall and proclaim the Gospel without any embarrassment or fear of humiliation.

I hope that you can stand today and say like the Apostle Paul:

“For I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the power of God that brings salvation to everyone who believes: first to the Jew, then to the Gentile” ([Romans 1:16](#)).

The Gospel is good news. This good news is reason to rejoice and reason to stand firm and boldly proclaim it. Let's be courageous in standing and identifying with Jesus with no fear and no shame. For the Gospel is the power of God and it truly is the only hope of salvation for everyone who will believe.