

## Romans 1:16-17

**Introduction:** Are you a leaf or a butterfly? You can turn a leaf over as many times as you want to and it is still a leaf. It can change colors, grow bigger, or fall off and it is still a leaf. But a butterfly wasn't always a butterfly. It started out as a caterpillar. And through a metamorphosis (a radical change) it became a butterfly. How as the Gospel affected you?

### **Breakdown of the Text:**

- ✚ **“For I am not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ.”** This is a powerful statement made by Paul considering his past. Paul says in Philippians 3 that if anyone could brag about their religious heritage he could. He was a “Hebrew of Hebrews” and a “Pharisee.” Paul even admits in Philippians 3 that he was “persecuting the church.” Yet now he says in Philippians 3:7, “But what things were gain to me, those things I counted loss for Christ.” And here in Romans he says that he is not “ashamed of the Gospel.” Why the change? Paul knew from experience that:
- ✚ **“For it is the power of God unto salvation.”** In other words the Gospel is how God intends to save people. Notice who's plan and who's power the Gospel is in, it is God's. This is important because the Jews thought they could be saved through keeping the Law. The word “power” here in the Greek is *dunamis*, which is where we get the English word dynamite. God's plan of salvation is so powerful that it destroys all forms of self-justification such as keeping the Law or being good enough to get into heaven. But it is also so powerful that it can overcome the vilest of sinners past. In other words the Gospel is God's plan for everyone which we see in the phrase “to everyone that believeth.” We are not so good that we don't need saving, neither are we so bad that we can't be saved. That is the good news! Paul next gives us the chronology of the Gospel when he says:
- ✚ **“To the Jew first and also to the Greek.”** Paul is pointing out that the Gospel was first sent to the Jews. Since Abraham's time Israel has always been the favored nation of God. They enjoyed a special relationship with Him. In fact according to John 7:42 we see that Jesus was from the seed of

David, which meant the Messiah was Jewish. However, the Jews rejected their Messiah and as a consequence they were set aside for a time. Jesus said it this way in Matthew 23:37, “O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, *thou* that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under *her* wings, and ye would not!” The rejection of Jesus by the Jews opened the door for salvation to the Greeks, that is the Gentiles. Please understand that the message of salvation coming to the Gentiles angered the Jews as they thought there were the only ones that God loved. Yet again we see that the Gospel is for everyone.

✠ **For therein is the righteousness of God.”** Paul connects verse 17 with verse 16 by the word “therein.” Paul is saying “there in (or through) the Gospel we can have the righteousness of God. To be “righteous” means to have a right standing with God. However, there is a problem with this. Romans 3:23 says that all have sinned and come short of the glory of God. Then in Romans 6:23 we see that the wages of sin is death. If this is true, then how can we have a right standing with a holy God? Charles Spurgeon called it the “Great Exchange.” The answer is found in 2 Corinthians 5:21 which says, “For he hath made him *to be* sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.” According to this verse God exchanged our sin with His right standing with God. Jesus took what we deserved so that we may receive what God desires for us. So the first thing we must realize is that the Gospel saves! But that is not all the Gospel does. The next phrase in verse 17 says:

✠ **“Revealed from faith to faith.”** Paul has just laid out the argument that it takes faith to receive the “righteousness of God.” That is what is meant by the first “faith” in this verse. The phrase “to faith” shows that once we have faith in the Gospel we are saved, but that is only half of the equation. Once we are saved, from that point forward we must live by faith. Paul concludes this verse by quoting from the Old Testament in Habakkuk 2:4 that says “the just shall live by faith.” Hebrews 11:6 reminds us, “For without faith it is impossible to please Him; for those who come to Him must believe that He is and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently

seek Him.” Therefore, not only does the Gospel save you, but it also sanctifies you. In other words it sets you apart for God’s purpose of being transformed into the image of Jesus according to Romans 8:29. Once God has saved you through the power of the Gospel, He begins to change you from the inside out, and He begins the process of making you look more like Christ. It should be noted that it is impossible for a person to be genuinely saved and not become more like Christ. So we learn from these two verses that the Gospel cannot only save you, but it also changes you.

### **Application:**

- ✠ We need to be saved by the Gospel. According to 1 Corinthians 15:3-4 the Gospel is that Jesus Christ was crucified, buried, and on the third day risen again for the sins of the world. Nothing else can save you but the shed blood of Jesus Christ.
- ✠ We need to realize church that the Gospel is for everyone, and we need to take it to them. We can’t wait for them to walk into these doors, we must go to them and share the same love and message that changed us. I want to challenge all of us to share the Gospel at least once this week. A message this good, how can we keep it to ourselves?
- ✠ We need to let the Gospel change us and make us more like Christ. How can I believe that Jesus Christ paid such a high price for my sins and yet I continue to live in sin? 2 Corinthians 5:17 tells us that we are a new person, the old person is dead. Ask yourself, is my life reflecting the fact that I am no longer who I use to be? Identify areas in your life that you are not like Christ. Then confess them to God, ask for His help in you leaving those things behind and embracing this new life.