

May 13, 2014

Living Out Loud For Christ

Romans 1:16-17 (NASB), ***“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.”***

I have always enjoyed a good spy novel or a good spy movie. As a high school student I discovered the world of Jack Ryan and The Hunt For Red October, Red Storm Rising, The Cardinal Of The Kremlin and numerous others by the late Tom Clancy. In all of these books the characters had to at some point hide their true identities or what they were up to in order to find out information. My favorite book of Mr. Clancy's was The Cardinal Of The Kremlin in which a Soviet general turns over military secrets to the United States. He had to *hide* what he was doing and in a sense who he really was from others within the Soviet state.

Sometimes I feel like we Christians are a bit like this. We are undercover Christians if you will. Our true identities as Christ followers are hidden from the world at large; in fact some of us are so good at it that the question becomes: Are we really Christ followers at all?

The apostle Paul lived his faith and his witness out loud in a world that was much more hostile to the truth of the gospel than the one we inhabit. By the time Paul had written this letter to the church at Rome, he had been imprisoned in Philippi, chased out of Thessalonica, smuggled out of Berea, laughed out of Athens, regarded as a complete idiot and fool in Corinth, and almost stoned to death in Galatia. Despite all of this Paul remained eager to preach the gospel in the capital city of the Roman Empire... Rome. Nothing seemed to be able to stop Paul from faithfully preaching the gospel of Jesus Christ wherever he went.

Why was Paul able and willing to do this? First of all it was because he understood that the ***“gospel”*** was the ***“power of God.”*** The word ***“power”*** is the Greek word *dunamis* from which we get our word dynamite. It means “power, might, strength, force.” 1 Corinthians 1:18 says, ***“For the word of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God.”*** Although the message of the gospel may sound foolish to some, the gospel is effective ultimately because it carries with it the very power of God.

Throughout Scripture we are constantly reminded that God is an all powerful and sovereign God. Deuteronomy 32:39, ***“See now that I, I am He, And there is no god besides Me; It is I who put to death and give life. I have wounded and it is I who heal, And there is no one who can deliver from My hand.”*** Psalm 33:8 says, ***“Let all the earth fear the LORD; Let all the inhabitants of the world stand in awe of Him. For He spoke, and it was done; He commanded, and it stood fast.”*** Matthew 28:18 says, ***“All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth.”***

The second thing that the apostle Paul understood was that the gospel is **“for salvation to everyone who believes.”** The word **“salvation”** is translated to mean “deliverance” or “rescue.”

The gospel is all powerful and it delivers people from their lost condition. Matthew 18:11 says, **“For the Son of Man has come to save that which was lost.”** The gospel delivers people from the wrath of God. Romans 5:9 says, **“Much more then, having now been justified by His blood, we shall be saved from the wrath of God through Him.”** The gospel also delivers us from the willful ignorance of our sinful state. 2 Thessalonians 1:8 says, **“dealing out retribution to those who do not know God and to those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus.”** The gospel delivers us from the deception and darkness of false teaching and false religions. Colossians 1:13 says, **“For He rescued us from the domain of darkness, and transferred us to the kingdom of His beloved Son...”** The gospel delivers us from the evil of our depravity and self indulgence. Luke 14:26 says, **“If anyone comes to Me, and does not hate his own father and mother and wife and children and brothers and sisters, yes, even his own life, he cannot be My disciple.”**

This salvation is for everyone who believes regardless of who you are. Paul writes that this salvation is for **“the Jew first and also to the Greek.”** The gospel was preached by Christ and the apostles to the Jewish people first and then to the larger Gentile world. But what does it mean to believe?

In John MacArthur’s commentary on Romans he writes that to believe is “to trust, rely on, or have faith in.” When we use believe as it relates to salvation it is used in the present tense which is important. This stresses that faith is not a moment in time but rather it should be an ongoing reality in our lives. Far too many Christians have fallen into the false belief that “believing” is saying a prayer or walking down an aisle. The reality though is that “believing” is the complete mental, emotional and volitional submission to Christ. This means that as Christ followers, we are to live our lives not in the shadows, hiding who we are and what we believe but instead we are to live lives that speak to the saving grace of Christ in our lives.

If you have any questions about what you have read today please contact me here at Calvary Baptist Church at 970-824-5222. You also may contact me via email at pastortra@centurylink.net. You also may contact me on Facebook or on Twitter at @Adamspastor.