**“I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ”**

*Romans 1:16*

**Introduction**

1. Consider Paul’s drastic transformation:
	1. **Philippians 3:5-6** – He had quite a resume as a Jew.
	2. Sat ***“at the feet of Gamaliel” (Acts 22:3)*** – ***“a teacher of the law held in respect by all the people” (5:34)***.
	3. Played a leadership role – obtained ***“authority and commission from the chief priests” (Acts 26:12)*** to bind Christians, and bring them back to Jerusalem.
	4. Did all in sincerity, devotion, and passion – ***“I have lived in all good conscience before God until this day” (Acts 23:1)***.
	5. **Cf. Acts 9** – Converted to Christ – ***“But what things were gain to me, these I have counted loss for Christ” (Philippians 3:7).***
		1. **Acts 9:23** – Persecuted by his own countrymen. (***Persecutor becomes persecuted – no doubt by those who respected him before, but now loathed him – people he made proud, who were now disappointed, etc.)***
		2. Commissioned to preach to the Gentiles that which they considered as foolish (**cf. 1 Corinthians 1:23**).
2. **Despite all the negativity which came with accepting the gospel of Christ, and living by it, Paul uttered still the words of Romans 1:16.**
3. We must be able, in full honesty, to say the same.
4. Paul Was Not Ashamed
5. Not Ashamed to Preach
	1. **Romans 1:13-16** – Paul had already been preaching to Gentiles elsewhere before he got to go to Rome.
		1. Many Gentiles believed, but many did not.
		2. Consider the reaction Paul God when preaching to such crowds – **Acts 17:16-21, 32** – At Mars’ Hill preaching to Athenians.
			1. Liked to hear new things.
			2. **Paul’s “new thing” was way out there to some – they mocked him.**
	2. **Acts 26:24-25** – Called insane by Festus.
		1. **Festus heard things of which Paul spoke – vision, enlightening Gentiles, resurrected Christ – And concluded that Paul was INSANE.**
		2. **(v. 25)** – Paul did not let that shake him. He knew what he spoke was reasonable, for it was truth.
		3. ***“For if we are beside ourselves, it is for God” (2 Corinthians 5:13a)***.
6. Not Ashamed to Practice What He Preached
	1. When Paul sought to correct the Corinthians, he was longsuffering and gentle, giving them opportunity to repent – **1 Corinthians 4:21.**
	2. **2 Corinthians 13:10** – His authority was for their edification, not destruction.
	3. **2 Corinthians 10:1-2** – In acting in these manners concerning his authority, Paul was acting as the One he preached – Christ.
		1. **He continued to do this despite what his enemies thought of such.**
		2. **(v. 10)** – They thought he was weak and pathetic.
		3. **2 Corinthians 13:7-9** – He did not want to show the magnitude of his authority in Christ with discipline – **If the Corinthians repented, AND THAT MADE HIM APPEAR WEAK TO OTHERS, he was not ashamed of such.**
	4. **This was no doubt true with all other facets of Christian living in Paul’s life – doctrine, morality…**
7. Not Ashamed When Imprisoned
	1. When Paul preached, he was put in prison more than once. He was not ashamed of his decision to do so. (Did not regret his decision.)
	2. **2 Timothy 1:8, 12** – Paul encouraged Timothy to not be ashamed of the gospel, nor of himself as he was imprisoned for the gospel’s sake.
		1. **2 Timothy 2:8-9** – Suffered for the gospel as an ***“evildoer.”***
		2. **Evildoer** – malefactor; criminal; worthless, depraved person (Placed in prison as one of these, and viewed by some as such.)
		3. BUT HE WAS NOT ASHAMED!
8. **We are called to have the same attitude about the gospel – we should never be ashamed of it!**
9. We Should Not Be Ashamed
10. When Taking the Narrow Way
	1. **Narrow is the way:**
		1. **Matthew 7:13-14** – Few decide to take narrow way.
			1. Narrow because it is restrictive, and difficult.
			2. **Requires self-discipline, and a spiritual eye (walk by faith, not sight).**
		2. **Many/few** – the narrow way is unpopular – the majority choose the wide way.
		3. **Romans 12:1-2** – We must not take the wide way by conforming to the world.
			1. **To decide to conform = being ashamed of the transformation.**
			2. ***“He also predestined [us] to be conformed to the image of His son” (Romans 8:29).***
			3. *Are we ashamed to be changed into the image of the Son of God?*
	2. **Peculiarity of Gospel Living:**
		1. **Part of that narrow way is being peculiar to others, and embracing that peculiarity.**
			1. Not being different just to be different.
			2. Being different to be closer to God, and more like Christ.
		2. **1 Peter 4:3-4** – They think it strange.
			1. The life lived by a faithful child of God is strange to the world.
			2. **We must not be ashamed of our peculiarity.**
	3. **Suffering as a Christian:**
		1. We will suffer in various forms if we live for Christ in the gospel.
		2. ***“Yes, and all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will suffer persecution” (2 Timothy 3:12).***
		3. **1 Peter 4:12-16** – We should not be ashamed of this suffering, but joyous about it!
			1. **Vv. 15, 16** – These comment on each other – **to suffer for doing evil is worthy of shame, but we should not feel that way about suffering for Christ.**
			2. It is not as if we are engaged in something which is disgraceful, and worthy of punishment!
	4. **Teaching and Desiring Sound Doctrine:**
		1. Others will desire stories, and even error over the gospel. **Why? They are ashamed of what the gospel says! (They prefer something else.)**
		2. **2 Timothy 4:1-5** – Instruction for Timothy to not preach what wants to be heard, but what NEEDS to be heard.
			1. **When we teach others, will we give them the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth?** *(Or will we be ashamed of the truth and tell a story, error, or water down the truth?)*
			2. **When others around us desire a different type of preaching – i.e. not gospel preaching – will we follow their lead?** *(Or do we love and desire the truth no matter how unpopular it is?)*
11. ***“…for it is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes” (Romans 1:16).***
	1. Why would we ever be ashamed, in any way, of that which will save us in the end?!
	2. **It is foolish to be ashamed of that alone which can save us! (It does not matter what God requires us to do, no matter how shameful the world views it, we should be willing to do it if it means we’ll be saved!)**

**Conclusion**

1. The apostle Paul was not ashamed of the gospel of Christ – these were not mere words, but the way he lived his life.
2. Christians should be able to say the same as Paul. Such will be reflected in the way we live.