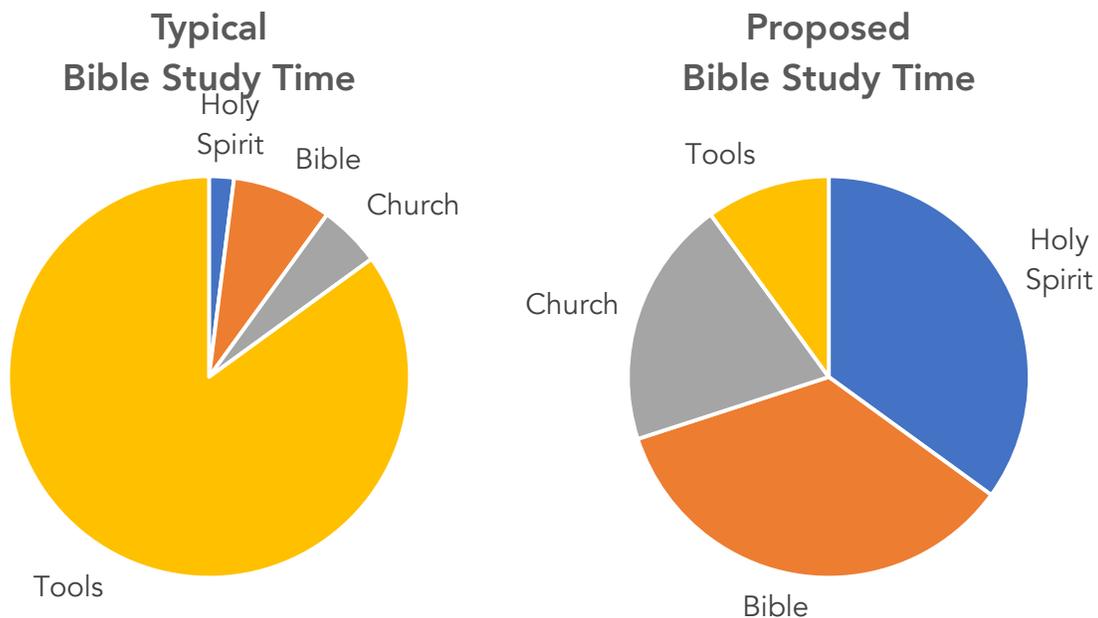


Romans

The Righteous Shall Live by Faith ([Romans 1:16-17](#))

Introduction

A gentle review: **Did we do this?** Spend more time with God and His Word than with anyone and anything else.



Our approach each week will be REAP (read, explain, apply, personalize).

Let's read the text that leads into this week's text.

Greeting

1 Paul, a servant of Christ Jesus, called to be an apostle, set apart for the gospel of God, 2 which he promised beforehand through his prophets in the holy Scriptures, 3 concerning his Son, who was descended from David according to the flesh 4 and was declared to be the Son of God in power according to the Spirit of holiness by his resurrection from the dead, Jesus Christ our Lord, 5 through whom we have received grace and apostleship to bring about the obedience of faith for the sake of his name among all the nations, 6 including you who are called to belong to Jesus Christ,

7 To all those in Rome who are loved by God and called to be saints:

Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

Longing to Go to Rome

8 First, I thank my God through Jesus Christ for all of you, because your faith is proclaimed in all the world. **9** For God is my witness, whom I serve with my spirit in the gospel of his Son, that without ceasing I mention you **10** always in my prayers, asking that somehow by God's will I may now at last succeed in coming to you. **11** For I long to see you, that I may impart to you some spiritual gift to strengthen you— **12** that is, that we may be mutually encouraged by each other's faith, both yours and mine. **13** I do not want you to be unaware, brothers, that I have often intended to come to you (but thus far have been prevented), in order that I may reap some harvest among you as well as among the rest of the Gentiles. **14** I am under obligation both to Greeks and to barbarians, both to the wise and to the foolish. **15** So I am eager to preach the gospel to you also who are in Rome.

Read: The Righteous Shall Live by Faith (1:16-17)

16 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. **17** For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith for faith, as it is written, "The righteous shall live by faith."

Explain: The Righteous Shall Live by Faith (1:16-17)

Bible study is asking and answering questions about the text. Let's ask some questions.

Are there any literary/structural observations?

This passage is two sentences, it starts with the word "**For**" (which connects prior thoughts), and in most of your translations, the last part of [Romans 1:17](#) looks differently than the rest of the text (it's because he's quoting the Old Testament—specifically, [Habakkuk 2:4](#)).

Moo: This chain of subordinate clauses is tied both to what comes before it and what comes after it (note the "**for**" in both v. 16 and v. 18); from the standpoint of syntax alone, this means that the main statement of the sequence is Paul's assertion of desire to preach the gospel in Rome (v. 15). Some interpreters accordingly question the common opinion in vv. 16-17 state the theme of the letter. Isolating these verses as the theme of the letter, it is argued, betrays a preoccupation with theology at the expense of the argumentative and syntactical flow of the text.

However, the rest of the letter is a fleshing out of these ideas and is almost universally accepted to be one of the major themes of [Romans](#).

What do the words mean?

16 For [a word that explains what came before] **I am not ashamed** [present (right-now-continuous) middle (the subject acting in his own interest) indicative (statement of fact); not ashamed] **of the gospel** [*euangelion*; a good message, gospel; note: some of your translations have “of Christ” here as well—that phrase does not appear in the text used as the basis for the ESV], **for** [a word that explains what came before] **it is** [present (right-now-continuous) middle (the subject acting in his own interest) or active (the subject performs the action) indicative (statement of fact)] **the power** [*dynamis*; force; miraculous power, ability, abundance, meaning, might, miracle, strength, violence, mighty work] **of God for** [to, unto] **salvation** [*soteria*; rescue, safety] **to everyone** [all, any, every, the whole] **who believes** [present (right-now-continuous) active (the subject performs the action) participle (note: “is believing” might be a more literal way to translate this); *pisteuo*; have faith (in, upon, or with respect to, a person or thing), credit, to entrust, believe, commit], **to the Jew** [the Jewish people] **first** [first in time, place, order, or importance] **and also** [and (‘also’ isn’t there)] **to the Greek** [non-Jewish people]. **17 For** [a word that explains what came before] **in it the righteousness** [*dikaioyne*; equity, justification, righteousness] **of God is revealed** [present (right-now-continuous) middle (the subject acting in his own interest) indicative (statement of fact); to take off the cover, disclosed, revealed] **from faith** [*pistis*; persuasion, moral conviction, reliance upon, constancy in profession, the system of religious truth, assurance, belief, believe, faith, fidelity] **for** [to or into] **faith** [*pistis*; persuasion, moral conviction, reliance upon, constancy in profession, the system of religious truth, assurance, belief, believe, faith, fidelity], **as it is written** [perfect (completed action with the results continuing) middle (the subject acting in his own interest) indicative (statement of fact); just as it is written/described (in [Habakkuk 2:4](#))], **“The righteous** [*dikaioi*; equitable, innocent, holy, just, righteous] **shall live** [future (anticipated action) active (the subject performs the action) indicative (statement of fact); live] **by faith** [*pistis*; persuasion, moral conviction, reliance upon, constancy in profession, the system of religious truth, assurance, belief, believe, faith, fidelity].”

Are there any repeated words?

Faith! This passage is all about faith. And, there are several words that will be seen again over and over throughout [Romans](#): gospel [*euangelion*], power [*dynamis*], salvation [*soteria*], believes [*pisteuo*], righteousness [*dikaioyne*], and faith [*pistis*]. Paul is playing tee-ball with [Romans 1:16-17](#); he is setting the stage for the rest of the letter.

Are there any repeated topics?

Not really, but there is a structure to the text that implies a lot of cause and effect relationships.

What are some observations of the text?

16 For I am not ashamed [Paul's desire to preach the gospel to those in Rome is explained by him not being ashamed. We do what we are not ashamed of. We don't do what we are ashamed of. **Stephen Archer: Paul was not ashamed of the gospel. Not because he was used to looking a little odd, but because his foundation was in the work of Christ on the cross. Paul set his identity towards Christ and cared more about everyone else's standing before God than he did about what they thought of him.**] **of the gospel** [The gospel is a good **message** (not just good news—it is a message) from God to mankind. The gospel is the good message of the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ for God's glory and our salvation.], **for it is** [present tense (right-now-continuous)—this implies the gospel is working right **now** and is powerful right **now** and is necessary right **now**. Many of us have a past tense view of the gospel—meaning it was good for the day of our conversion, but that's insufficient. The gospel is powerful and working and active in the life of a believer right now—today—this moment. For many of us, our idea of the gospel is **peanut**-butteringly deficient. The gospel was active and working before you 'got saved,' while you were 'getting saved,' and right now it is 'keeping you saved.'] **the power of God** [The gospel is by God, about God, for God, and in the interest of God—which implies the gospel is not about man—we benefit, but we are not the beginning, subject, or ending of the gospel—those roles belong exclusively to God. **Keller: Paul is saying that the gospel is not merely a concept or a philosophy. The message of the gospel is what God has done and will do for us. The gospel is therefore a power. He doesn't say it brings power or has power, but that it actually IS power. It is powerful because it does what no other power on earth can do: it can save us, reconcile us to God, and guarantee us a place in the kingdom of God forever.**] **for salvation** [Maclaren: That is a strange embodiment of divine power. Yes, and because so strange, it is so touching, and so conquering. The power that is draped in weakness is power indeed.] **to everyone who believes** [the reason I am not a universalist (meaning all will eventually be saved) is due to those two words—'who believes.' Again, notice that our salvation is a right-now salvation. Our salvation assumes we continue to believe. Salvation is an always-**on** concept. Spread the peanut butter thick—this is a rich idea.], **to the Jew first** [God's plan is Jews **first**, everybody-else second.] **and also to the Greek** [Praise the Lord for this "and"—without it, we would be lost. We are the Greeks—we are the non-Jews. I'm fine being second—because second gets into the family.]. **17 For in it the righteousness of God** [What is "the righteousness of God?" **Stott: The righteousness of God can be thought of as a divine attribute (our God is a righteous God), or activity (he comes to our rescue), or achievement (he bestows on us a righteous status). All three are treated and have been held by different scholars, sometimes in relation to each**

other. For myself, I have never been able to see why we have to choose, and why all three should not be combined. . . . In other words, it is at one and the same time a quality, an activity and a gift.] **is revealed** [It is impossible to see clearly now, but one day—God’s full righteousness will be uncovered and revealed and we will see how the gospel displayed His righteousness. I think this may also be a reference to the tabernacle and temple where God’s holiness was hidden behind a veil. But one day . . .] **from faith for faith, as it is written, “The righteous shall live by faith.”** [Moo: Though not explicit here, another focus of Romans is the insistence that faith is in no sense a “work.” Therefore, although we must never go to the extreme of making the person a totally passive instrument through whom believing occurs—for Paul makes clear that people are responsible to believe—we must also insist that believing is not something we *do* (in the sense of “works”) but is always a response, an accepting of the gift God holds out to us in his grace (see especially 4:1-8). As Calvin puts it, faith is “a kind of vessel” with which we “come empty and with the mouth of our soul open seek God’s grace.”]

What were Martin Luther’s observations on this text?

This is an important question as Luther’s interactions with this text are what (by his own account) spurred on his own salvation and eventually led to the entire Protestant Reformation. We can debate the impact of the Protestant Reformation on Baptists but the impact on the body of Christ is nearly immeasurable.

Martin Luther (1483-1546). This selection is taken from *The Preface to the Complete Edition of Luther’s Latin Writings*. It was written by Luther in Wittenberg, 1545:

Meanwhile, I had already during that year returned to interpret the Psalter [Psalms] anew. I had confidence in the fact that I was more skillful, after I had lectured in the university on St. Paul’s epistles to the Romans, to the Galatians, and the one to the Hebrews. I had indeed been captivated with an extraordinary ardor [passion] for understanding Paul in the Epistle to the Romans. But up till then it was not the cold blood about the heart, but a single word [or phrase] in Chapter 1, **“In it the righteousness of God is revealed”** that had stood in my way. For I hated that word **“righteousness of God,”** which, according to the use and custom of all the teachers, I had been taught to understand philosophically regarding the formal or active righteousness, as they call it, with which God is righteous and punishes the unrighteous sinner [meaning man had no righteousness].

Though I lived as a monk without reproach, I felt that I was a sinner before God with an extremely disturbed conscience. I could not believe that he was placated by my satisfaction. I did not love, yes, I hated the righteous God who punishes sinners, and secretly, if not blasphemously, certainly murmuring greatly, I was angry with God, and

said, "As if, indeed, it is not enough, that miserable sinners, eternally lost through original sin, are crushed by every kind of calamity by the law of the Decalogue [Ten Commandments], without having God add pain to pain by the gospel and also by the gospel threatening us with his righteousness and wrath!" Thus I raged with a fierce and troubled conscience.

Nevertheless, I beat importunately [persistently] upon Paul at that place, most ardently [passionately] desiring to know what St. Paul wanted. At last, by the mercy of God, meditating day and night, I gave heed to the context of the words, namely, "In it the righteousness of God is revealed, as it is written, 'He who through faith is righteous shall live.'" There I began to understand that the righteousness of God is that by which the righteous lives by a gift of God, namely by faith. And this is the meaning: the righteousness of God is revealed by the gospel, namely, the passive [received] righteousness with which merciful God justifies us by faith, as it is written, "He who through faith is righteous shall live." Here I felt that I was altogether born again and had entered paradise itself through open gates. There a totally other face of the entire Scripture showed itself to me. Thereupon I ran through the Scripture from memory. I also found in other terms an analogy, as, the work of God, that is what God does in us, the power of God, with which he makes us wise, the strength of God, the salvation of God, the glory of God. And I extolled my sweetest word with a love as great as the hatred with which I had before hated the word "righteousness of God." Thus that place in Paul was for me truly the gate to paradise.

Translation: Martin Luther got saved by studying (and staring at) [Romans 1:16-17](#). And this changed everything for him—no longer could he tolerate a system of indulgences—because it was not about money—it was about faith.

Dave Barber: No wonder Martin Luther's world got rocked! He was this massive "system" of the Catholic Church that was a "machine" built to receive every other method or effort to make man right with God and they completely missed it. . .

Apply (What is the point?)

1. The gospel is the power of God
2. The gospel is for right **now**
3. [Romans 1:16-17](#) is _____

Personalize (What do we do with that?)

1. **Believe** the gospel
2. Believe the gospel right **now**
3. Memorize [Romans 1:16-17](#)

Next week: God's Wrath on Unrighteousness (1:18-32)

18 For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who by their unrighteousness suppress the truth. 19 For what can be known about God is plain to them, because God has shown it to them. 20 For his invisible attributes, namely, his eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly perceived, ever since the creation of the world, in the things that have been made. So they are without excuse. 21 For although they knew God, they did not honor him as God or give thanks to him, but they became futile in their thinking, and their foolish hearts were darkened. 22 Claiming to be wise, they became fools, 23 and exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images resembling mortal man and birds and animals and creeping things.

24 Therefore God gave them up in the lusts of their hearts to impurity, to the dishonoring of their bodies among themselves, 25 because they exchanged the truth about God for a lie and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever! Amen.

26 For this reason God gave them up to dishonorable passions. For their women exchanged natural relations for those that are contrary to nature; 27 and the men likewise gave up natural relations with women and were consumed with passion for one another, men committing shameless acts with men and receiving in themselves the due penalty for their error.

28 And since they did not see fit to acknowledge God, God gave them up to a debased mind to do what ought not to be done. 29 They were filled with all manner of unrighteousness, evil, covetousness, malice. They are full of envy, murder, strife, deceit, maliciousness. They are gossips, 30 slanderers, haters of God, insolent, haughty, boastful, inventors of evil, disobedient to parents, 31 foolish, faithless, heartless, ruthless. 32 Though they know God's righteous decree that those who practice such things deserve to die, they not only do them but give approval to those who practice them.

Homework

Resources (our helps—order matters)

- Holy Spirit
- The Bible: [Romans](#) (ESV)
- Church: bit.ly/FlemingSS
- Tools: bit.ly/romans2017

Our process

- Ask (the Holy Spirit for help)
- Read ([Romans](#))
- Talk (to someone in our class)
- Send (your feedback to Jim (jim314@yahoo.com) by Wed

Quotes & Observations

Albert Whiting (Calvin)

Amy Valovcin (Hughes)

The Bible is for everyone, salvation is for everyone, Jesus is for everyone.

We live by faith. This weekend at the women's retreat we talked about drinking when we aren't thirsty and eating when we aren't hungry. Staying full on the word of God at all times, not just when we are crying out for help or when we are praising Him. "Not being ashamed of the gospel" but living on it, through it, around it, and in it all the time.

Chris Arnold (Barclay)

Paul Says a LOT in a short period of time here. He spends a lot of words to say who he is, and to establish the greeting of his letter to the Romans. He writes in typical "Paul Verbiage," complete with commas and sentences that twist and turn.

Until here.

This is like when I was in college way back in the medieval times and there were a lot of people talking all at the same time. When the professor just walks in and starts writing on the board the little tap-tapping of the chalk on the board always cut through the noise and got everyone's attention.

Paul just throws it out there for everyone to see. And the way he says it is unequivocal: "My message is the Gospel, and the Gospel of Christ contains the means for salvation and eternal life for EVERYBODY."

He just made his thesis statement right there.

Barclay called the faith Paul spoke of as multifaceted, but the phrases he used which I liked the best were "**indestructible hope**" and "**total and absolute trust.**"

Christen Barber (Luther)

Darla Skinner (Mounce)

That the righteousness providing life is based solely on faith is central to the New Testament teaching on salvation. *Sola fide* became the central theme of the Reformation in the sixteenth century. Whenever ecclesiastical teaching begins to compromise with the pagan notion that righteousness can be earned, there needs to be a clear reaffirmation that God's righteousness comes from faith, not works. "**Just as it is written**" translates the Greek verb in the perfect tense (*gegraptai*). This emphasizes the permanence and authoritative nature of Scripture. If it is true that Scripture is

“holy” (see [Rom 1:2](#))—and it is—then it follows that it is also true and unchanging. While the application of God’s word requires an understanding of contemporary culture, it is not true that it must change with the passing scene. Truth remains. Its relevance to a particular point in time requires an informed and sensitive application.

David Barber (his college notes)

Most of the time it is the simple things that we get caught up by. The whole deal of the Gospel (which is the whole deal of our existence) is that it is attained by **Faith**. I think what Paul is saying, in what it seems to be universally seen as the summary statement of [Romans](#), is quite literally:

From start to finish

From beginning to end

The whole deal

The entire essence

The point of the Gospel

The only thing we should concern ourselves with

The only thing we can concern ourselves with

Is that we receive salvation by **Faith** (Insert George Michael ear worm here . . . “I gotta have Faith . . .”

No wonder Martin Luther’s world got rocked! He was this massive “system” of the Catholic Church that was a “machine” built to receive every other method or effort to make man right with God and they completely missed it. . .

So I am going to spend the rest of this week (in actuality the rest of my life) thinking, pondering, chewing on, marveling over the enormity, simplicity and beauty of God “one upping” all of man’s effort with one word/concept . . . Faith

I have always love it when one simple thing confounds the status quo, “the system,” or what people take as the norm.

Just some thoughts (and somewhat ramblings) about why I love what God does in [Romans](#).

Doug Skinner (Phillips)

George Jackson (Murray)

Jessica Miller (Stott)

The reasons these affirmations are so striking is that they are in direct antithesis to the attitude of many in the contemporary church. People nowadays tend to regard evangelism as an optional extra and consider (if they engage in it) that they are conferring a favor on God; Paul spoke of it as an obligation. The modern mood is one of reluctance; Paul's was one of eagerness or enthusiasm. Many of us today would have to confess, if we are honest, that we *are* ashamed of the gospel; Paul declared that he was not.

The NIV *I am bound* in the RSV '*I am under obligation*' should probably be translated '*I am [a] debtor*' (AV).

It is in the second sense that Paul is in debt. He has not borrowed anything from the Romans which must repay. But Jesus Christ has entrusted him with the gospel for them.

It was because of his sense of debt to them that he could write: *That is why I am so eager to preach the gospel also to you who are at Rome* (15).

Similarly, we are debtors to the world, even though we are not apostles. If the gospel has come to us (which it has), we have no liberty to keep it to ourselves. Nobody may claim a monopoly of the gospel. Good news is for sharing. We are under obligation to make known to others.

Such was Paul's first incentive. He was eager because he was in debt. It is universally regarded as a dishonorable thing to leave a debt unpaid. We should be as eager to discharge our debt as Paul was to discharge his.

He knew the message of the cross was '*foolishness*' to some and '*a stumbling block*' to others, because it undermines self-righteousness and challenges self-indulgence. So whenever the gospel is faithfully preached, it arouses opposition, often contempt, and sometimes ridicule.

Reflecting on the apostle's three personal affirmations in [verses 14-16](#), we have seen that his eagerness to evangelize in Rome arose from the recognition that the gospel is an unpaid debt to the world and the saving power of God. The first gave him a sense of obligation (he had been put in trust with the good news), and the second a sense of conviction (if it had saved him, it could save others). Still today the gospel is both a debt to discharge and a power to experience. Only when we have grasped and felt

these truths shall we be able to say with Paul, 'I am not ashamed . . . I am under obligation . . . So I am eager to share the gospel with the world.'

Thus the righteousness of God can be thought of as a divine attribute (our God is a righteous God), or activity (he comes to our rescue), or achievement (he bestows on us a righteous status). All three are treated and have been held by different scholars, sometimes in relation to each other. For myself, I have never been able to see why we have to choose, and why all three should not be combined. . . . In other words, it is at one and the same time a quality, an activity and a gift.

It seems legitimate to affirm, therefore, that 'the righteousness of God' is God's righteous initiative in putting sinners right with himself, by bestowing on them a righteousness which is not their own but is. 'The righteousness of God' is God's just justification of the unjust, his righteous way of pronouncing the unrighteous righteous, in which he both demonstrates his righteousness and gives righteousness to us. He has done it through Christ, the righteous one, who died for the unrighteous, as Paul will explain later. And he does it by faith when we put our trust in him, and cry to him for mercy.

Many explanations this phrase have been proposed, some more ingenious than others. I mentioned what seemed to me to be the foremost plausible. The first relates to faith's *origin*, as Bengel puts it: 'from the faith of God, who makes the offer, to the faith of men who receive it'. More simply, it is 'from God's faith (better, faithfulness) to our faith'. God's faithfulness always comes first, and ours is never other than a response. This was Karl Barth's understanding. Secondly, the *spread* of faith by evangelism may be in Paul's mind: 'from one believer to another'. Thirdly, he may be alluding to faith's *growth*, 'from one degree of faith to another' (cf. 2 Cor. 3:18, RSV). Fourthly, it may be faith's primacy which is being stressed. In this case the expression is purely rhetorical and has been rendered, for example, *by faith from first to last* (NIV) for 'by faith through and through'.

Jessica Norris (Kroll)

My reading concentrated solely on [verse 17](#) which I thought was odd because he then states that you cannot make sense of [verse 17](#) without [verse 16](#).

- Paul is quoting the prophet Habakkuk in [verse 17](#). He likens it to a mother that tells their child to do something and that "being told once should be enough" when dealing with righteousness. [Habakkuk 2:4](#) "Behold, as for the proud one, his soul is not right within him; but the righteous will live by his faith." [Habakkuk 2:4](#) and [Romans 1:17](#) are telling us that through the gospel the righteousness of God is revealed. With these two verses, we have now been told twice. Paul later goes a 3rd time to repeat this in [Galatians 3:11](#) and even though Paul didn't

write [Hebrews](#), we are told again in [Hebrews 10:38](#), so how many times does God have to tell us in His word that he expects us to live a faithful life?

- The theme of [verse 17](#) is that we cannot live joyfully before God and others unless we live righteously before God and others.
- There is nothing we can do to obtain righteousness because it is a gift from God through the person of Jesus. Righteousness is not God's attribute. It implies that this righteousness is the way God treats us as a result of our response in faith to the gospel.

[Justin Harness \(McGee\)](#)

[Jim Fleming \(Moo\)](#)

This chain of subordinate clauses is tied both to what comes before it and what comes after it (note the "for" in both v. 16 and v. 18); from the standpoint of syntax alone, this means that the main statement of the sequence is Paul's assertion of desire to preach the gospel in Rome (v. 15). Some interpreters accordingly question the common opinion in vv. 16-17 state the theme of the letter. Isolating these verses as the theme of the letter, it is argued, betrays a preoccupation with theology at the expense of the argumentative and syntactical flow of the text.

It is also possible to view the individual elements of vv. 16-17 as each summing up different parts of the letter.

Though not explicit here, another focus of Romans is the insistence that faith is in no sense a "work." Therefore, although we must never go to the extreme of making the person a totally passive instrument through whom believing occurs—for Paul makes clear that people are responsible to believe—we must also insist that believing is not something we *do* (in the sense of "works") but is always a response, an accepting of the gift God holds out to us in his grace (see especially 4:1-8). As Calvin puts it, faith is "a kind of vessel" with which we "come empty and with the mouth of our soul open seek God's grace."

[Julia Gregg \(Schreiner\)](#)

The largest observation for me was the connection between thoughts . . . these verses are Paul's affirmation that he is prepared to profess the gospel publicly and bear witness to its saving power—he is unashamed because the power of the gospel is that it results in salvation . . . an effective work to call sinners to a saving grace. Also present in the text is a tension between divine sovereignty and human responsibility. (61) One does not merely trip into salvation mistakenly or inadvertently—it is a conscious choice. Another gripping thought was the forensic sense of text in that Paul identifies that God does not make people righteous or guilty . . . he declares them as such (65); therefore

righteousness has a forensic dimension in that it is not intrinsic to the nature of man but is gifted in salvation (covered by the blood). Righteousness becomes the divine act of God when it transforms the lives of believers. Finally, as is the theme of this book, the ultimate reason that God declares those righteous who put their faith and trust in Jesus is because it glorifies His name. . . . The more I read the more I realize Paul is building a case in many ways and continues to tie back to the cornerstone in unique ways.

Julie Fleming (Keller)

Keller starts out this section talking about being ashamed of or offended by the gospel. "The gospel, by telling us that our salvation is free and undeserved, is really insulting. This offends moral and religious people who think their decency gives them an advantage over less moral people." He goes on to say that "we are so wicked that only the death of the Son of God could save us, trying to be good and spiritual isn't enough, and that our salvation was accomplished by Jesus' suffering and serving not conquering and destroying and following him means to suffer and serve with him."

It took me a while to think about these. The first one still bothers me. Once in college someone asked me if I deserved to be saved and I was ready to say yes! They were like, no you don't. When I sit down and think about it, I think, sure, I'm a good person. I don't do "bad" things. I deserve this. And then all I can think about it what you've said over and over . . . what we are/what we have to offer is but filthy rags. I'm not ashamed of the gospel. I'm more embarrassed that I don't know enough about it to be comfortable enough to talk about it. I can talk about you all day long because I know you, but I can't talk about Jeremy Fisher because I know nothing about him other than who he is. I can't share the gospel because I don't really know the gospel. I just know who he is.

Verse 16: it is the power of God. Keller says that "Paul is saying that the gospel is not merely a concept or a philosophy. The message of the gospel is what God has done and will do for us. The gospel is therefore a power. He doesn't say it brings power or has power, but that it actually IS power. It is powerful because it does what no other power on earth can do: it can save us, reconcile us to God, and guarantee us a place in the kingdom of God forever."

everyone who believes: "Paul says that the gospel's power is boundless and boundaried at the same time. He says it is to everyone. It came to the Jew first, through Jesus, but it is for the Gentile as well- everyone and anyone. Yet he also sets a limit on it. It is for everyone WHO BELIEVES."

Verse 17: For in it the righteousness of God is revealed. Keller asks "What is it about the gospel which makes it so powerful, which gives it this life-remolding quality? Because 'FOR' in the gospel a righteousness from God is revealed. The gospel is about

the Son—but here we see the achievement of the gospel, that in it “a righteousness from God is revealed.” “Right standing is received from God, offered to us by his Son.”

from faith for faith. “Righteousness is from faith for faith, in which case the teaching is: God’s faithfulness [to His promises, and in the life and death of Jesus Christ] always comes first, and ours is never other than a response.” (John Stott) “We do not become righteous by faith and then maintain it through our own goodness. Paul tells us that we have been given righteousness, rather than merely declared not guilty.”

“The gospel is the power of God. It reveals God’s righteousness, and is the way we receive his righteousness. This is what reverses our attitude to sharing the gospel. The opposite of being ashamed is not willingness; it’s eagerness.”

Karrie Harness (MacArthur Bible Study)

Michelle Erickson (MacArthur)

Olivia Swint (MacArthur)

Rachel Samsel (McGee)

One thing I liked that McGee said about **verse 16** was: I am a debtor—that is admission; I am ready—remission; I am not ashamed—submission. These are the three “missions” of Paul. Admission, remission and submission.

Another quote I liked about **verse 17** was: “**The just shall live by faith.**” “Justification by faith means that a sinner who trusts Christ is not only pardoned because Christ died, but he also stands before God complete in Christ. It means not only subtraction of sin, but addition of righteousness.”

Sean McGarvey (Ironsides)

Looks like I had already given you what Ironsides had for these two verses:

On the “**from faith to faith**” of **verse 17**:

“It is really ‘out of faith unto faith.’ That is, on the principle of faith to those who have faith. In other words, it is not a doctrine of salvation by works, but a proclamation of salvation entirely on the faith principle. This had been declared to Habakkuk long centuries before when God said to the troubled prophet, ‘**The just shall live by faith.**’ This is the text of the entire epistle, as we have already seen, and of Galatians and Hebrews likewise.” (p. 21)

“Justification by faith alone is the test of orthodoxy. But no mind untaught by the Holy Spirit will ever receive it, for it sets the first man aside altogether as in the flesh and

unprofitable in order that the Second Man, the Man of God's counsels, the Lord Jesus Christ, may alone be exalted." (p. 21)

Stephen Archer

Context

In Roman history, someone who interpreted omens and signs from the gods was called an Augur. According to [Wikipedia: The augur was a priest and official in the classical Roman world. His main role was the practice of augury, interpreting the will of the gods by studying the flight of birds: whether they are flying in groups or alone, what noises they make as they fly, direction of flight and what kind of birds they are. This was known as 'taking the auspices.' The ceremony and function of the augur was central to any major undertaking in Roman society—public or private—including matters of war, commerce, and religion.](#)

Other major religious figures would have been:

- Magistrates who lead local ceremonies for Greek gods.
- Pharisees who were the religious figures for the Jews
- Sadducees who were another religious group of the Jews
- Pharaoh's were gods themselves and had priests as their go between.

In all of the above cases, the religious leaders were prominent figures in the particular societies. The success of the religious leaders showed the success of the nation. Not only that, but if their omen came true, they would receive great rewards from the kings and generals. However, if the religious leader gave a bad omen, and things went awry, the religious leader would be stoned, beaten, or even killed.

Paul is claiming to be an apostle of Jesus Christ. He is one who has seen Jesus Christ and was a direct convert from Jesus Christ Himself. He is a man who is put in the place of helping people to know God. Yet, Paul is a man in chains. To any normal human being, this would be counterintuitive to whom they should follow.

Observations

Why would someone be ashamed? The following is what some modern "Christians" are saying about the gospel.

Joel Osteen: But Hebrews 10:30 says, "God is a just God. He will repay the compensation owed to us. He will settle the cases of His people." You may have been through things you don't understand, but get ready because the Creator of the universe is adding up all the deficits. If you will allow Him to work in your life, He will bring you out increased, promoted, vindicated and better than you were before.

Kenneth Copeland: If you're like most Christians, you want to live a better life. You want better health, better finances, better relationships and better life experiences. We've all been there at some time or another. BUT we have good news for you because there is always hope in Jesus, God and His WORD! The moment you accepted Jesus as LORD of your life, all the promises of God and the power of God became available to you, so you can overcome any situation you will ever face.

Jessee Duplantis: Many Christians believe that prosperity is about possessions. That's the reason a lot of folk get so riled up about the prosperity message. The simple truth is that the prosperity message is not a money message. Prosperity is an obedience message. God gives the power to get wealth, but the manifestation of obedience to that power is money. God gives the power to get healed, but the manifestation of obedience to that power is healing. God gives the power for us to get saved, but the manifestation of obedience to that power is salvation.

Does this message of Christ sound like something to be ashamed of?

Not at all. In fact, the Bible is the worst propagating book in all of history and Christianity is the worst propagating religion of all time. Consider the following:

1 Corinthians 11:23-33: with far greater labors, far more imprisonments, with countless beatings, and often near death. Five times I received at the hands of the Jews the forty lashes less one. Three times I was beaten with rods. Once I was stoned. Three times I was shipwrecked; a night and a day I was adrift at sea; on frequent journeys, in danger from rivers, danger from robbers, danger from my own people, danger from Gentiles, danger in the city, danger in the wilderness, danger at sea, danger from false brothers; in toil and hardship, through many a sleepless night, in hunger and thirst, often without food, in cold and exposure. And, apart from other things, there is the daily pressure on me of my anxiety for all the churches. Who is weak, and I am not weak? Who is made to fall, and I am not indignant? If I must boast, I will boast of the things that show my weakness. The God and Father of the Lord Jesus, the who is blessed forever, knows that I am not lying. At Damascus, the governor under King Aretas was guarding the city of Damascus in order to seize me, but I was let down in a basket through a window in the wall and escaped his hands.

Or

Hebrews 12:35-38: Women received back their dead by resurrection. Some were tortured, refusing to accept release, so that they might rise again to a better life. Others suffered mocking and flogging, and even chains and

imprisonment. They were stoned, they were sawn in two, they were killed with the sword. They went about in skins of sheep and goats, destitute, afflicted, mistreated— of whom the world was not worthy—wandering about in deserts and mountains, and in dens and caves of the earth.

Lastly, the words of Christ, Himself.

Matthew 5:11-12: Blessed are you when others revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account. Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you.

Does *this* sound like something that people would be willing to follow?

What is the gospel?

G2098 - εὐαγγέλιον - the glad tidings of the kingdom of God soon to be set up, and subsequently also of Jesus the Messiah, the founder of this kingdom. After the death of Christ, the term comprises also the preaching of (concerning) Jesus Christ as having suffered death on the cross to procure eternal salvation for the men in the kingdom of God, but as restored to life and exalted to the right hand of God in heaven, thence to return in majesty to consummate the kingdom of God

Greg Gilbert defines the gospel as: God, Man, Christ, Response.

God – Existing in three parts: Father, Son and Spirit created the world. On the sixth day he created his magnum opus, man.

Man – God created man (Adam) and woman (Eve) sinless and good. He placed them in a garden and told them that they were allowed to eat of all of the trees. There was only one law, they couldn't eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. Adam was the best chance we had at salvation and he failed. This brought sin into the world. Sin is anything that separates us from God. While most of the time we see the effects of sin, sin is truly a bent of our hearts. This is when we place ourselves on the throne of our hearts and serve ourselves. We needed saving and couldn't do it ourselves.

Christ – Thus, the second person in the trinity, Christ, came in to the world. He lived a perfect and sinless life. Jesus was crucified on a cross as the atonement for our sins. Not only did he die, but after three days the Father raised him back to life as a way of validating Christ's work on our behalf.

Response – The third part of the trinity works in the hearts of humans in order to turn their hearts to Christ. We don't know who's hearts he is working in, so it is our responsibility to reach all people for the gospel.

Thus, the gospel work is Trinitarian. It is not about us and the works we do. It is all focused on the work of the trinity in our lives.

What does Jew first, Greek second all about?

Historically, God chose the Jews first. This occurred when He visited Abraham and said that "All nations would be blessed through his offspring." He chose them from all of the other nations. He could have chosen the Egyptians, the Assyrians, the Babylonians, the Edomites, the Samaritans. Literally, he could have chosen any other nation of the world that He created. Yet, He chose the Jewish people.

Next, He brought them out of the land of Egypt. God could have allowed them to stay and to remain slaves in the land of Egypt, but he chose to listen to their cries and to bring them out of Egypt.

Third, even after Israel rebelled against God and were taken into slavery, he brought them out of those nations once against to become the national of Israel.

Finally, when Jesus came to earth, he did not go to the Romans, the Egyptians, the Babylonians, Assyrians, or any other powerful nation. Jesus came to the Jews. He offered salvation to them first. When they rejected Him, salvation was then sent out to the rest of the world.

Why would Paul quote Habakkuk in this instance?

Habakkuk 2:4: Behold, his soul is puffed up; it is not upright within him, but the righteous shall live by his faith.

Why not quote Ezekiel 18:9? [If a man] walks in my statutes, and keeps my rules by acting faithfully—he is righteous; he shall surely live, declares the Lord GOD."

Ezekiel 18:9 shows a man whose heart has been affected by the grace of God as one who desires to walk according to the statutes of the Lord. Our actions do not obtain us grace. However, "out of our heart does our mouth speak." Thus, to say that the man in **Ezekiel** is righteous because of his actions would not be correct. "All of our 'righteous deeds' are as 'douche bags.'"

Why isn't the righteousness of God revealed in the law?

Galatians 2:1: I do not nullify the grace of God, for if righteousness were through the law, then Christ died for no purpose.

Galatians 3:10-14: For all who rely on works of the law are under a curse; for it is written, "Cursed be everyone who does not abide by all things written in the Book of the Law, and do them." Now it is evident that no one is justified before God by the law, for "The righteous shall live by faith." But the law is not of faith, rather "The one who does them shall live by them." Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us—for it is written, "Cursed is everyone who is hanged on a tree"—so that in Christ Jesus the blessing of Abraham might come to the Gentiles, so that we might receive the promised Spirit through faith.

Galatians 3:24: So then, the law was our guardian until Christ came, in order that we might be justified by faith.

Galatians 4:4-5: But when the fullness of time had come, God sent forth his Son, born of woman, born under the law, to redeem those who were under the law, so that we might receive adoption as sons.

What is revealed from faith for faith?

Genesis 15:6: And he [Abraham] believed the LORD, and he counted it to him as righteousness.

Galatians 3:6: just as Abraham "believed God, and it was counted to him as righteousness"

In the new testament time, there were very few people who spoke and read in Hebrew. What ended up happening was that the Old Testament was translated from Hebrew into Greek. This is called the Septuagint. The Greek word for believe in the Septuagint in **Genesis 15:6** and in **Galatians 3:6** comes from the same Greek word "πίστις (pistis)" which means believe or faith. Thus, Abraham had faith and it was counted to him as righteousness.

Inasmuch as Abraham's faith was the beginning of the promise of the gospel to the Jews, his faith was given to encourage those later on in the history of the Jews and Gentiles. We can look back to the faith of Abraham and be encouraged by his faith before he had received any signs of the promise.

Application

First, for unbelievers, are you trying to rest in your own work? Thinking that one day you will stand before God and your good works will outweigh your bad works? You wrestle with yourself thinking, "I'm not as bad as Hitler, or I'm not in jail, so I must be

doing OK. Like Paul said in the passage today, the righteous shall live by faith. Compared to Christ and His work on the cross, all of our righteousness are as filthy rags. As such, we have no hope apart from Christ.

Second, for Christians, how often do you attempt to rest in our works thinking that God will look on us with my grace today than He did yesterday? Jesus Christ and His work on the cross was sufficient enough for us. God doesn't look on us as though we are sinners. He looks on us as though we are His children. **Zephaniah 3:17** says **"The LORD your God is in your midst, a mighty one who will save; he will rejoice over you with gladness; he will quiet you by his love; he will exult over you with loud singing."** God doesn't just hum a tune. No, he exults over us with loud singing. Now, I don't bring this up to take the centrality of the gospel off of God and place it back on us as though God delighting in us is the moral of the story. No, but his delight over us should free us from our self-doubt and insecurities and Jesus Christ has paid for all of our sins; past, present and future.

Finally, how many times are we afraid to share the gospel with someone because we might look a little weird? We reason to ourselves that it was easy for Paul to do, he was used to looking a little strange, right? Paul was not ashamed of the gospel. Not because he was used to looking a little odd, but because his foundation was in the work of Christ on the cross. Paul set his identity towards Christ and cared more about everyone else's standing before God than he did about what they thought of him.

Penn Gillette of Penn & Teller tells a story about a man who saw him after one of his shows. He said the man walked up to him and wanted to share the gospel with him. Penn listened to the man and graciously thanked him for his time, but he wasn't really interested. But that thought never left him. Later, he posted a video online telling the story and he asked a question I will never forget. If we, as Christians, truly believe that there is a holy and righteous God and we truly believe that one-day people will stand before him and give an account to him for all of their actions, how much do we have to hate a person not to tell them?

I don't tell this story to guilt you into telling a person about Jesus. I am the least to point that out. I only tell the story to help us think of things in terms of eternity. What is a momentary bit of uncomfortability in light of eternity? Sharing the gospel is as easy as God, man, Christ, response.

Stephen Samsel (Stott)

Main point of the study I'm reading through is that there is nothing to be ashamed of unless you've felt tempted to be ashamed. Here is the text from my book: **I once heard James Stewart of Edinburgh, in a sermon on this text, make the perceptive comment**

that "there's no sense in declaring that you're not ashamed of something unless you've been tempted to feel ashamed of it."

Tim & Mila Archer (Maclaren)

Romans 1:16

To preach the Gospel in Rome had long been the goal of Paul's hopes. He knew its power well, and was not appalled. The danger was an attraction to his chivalrous spirit. He believed in flying at the head when you are fighting with a serpent, and he knew that influence exerted in Rome would thrill through the Empire.

*Their "Rome's" notion of power was sharp swords and iron yokes on the necks of subject peoples. But the history of Christianity, whatever else it has been, has been the history of the supremacy and the revolutionary force of ideas.

I. What Paul thought was the Gospel

- Here is, in the briefest possible words, his summary; the universality of sin, the awful burden of guilt, the tremendous outlook of penalty, the impossibility of man rescuing himself or living righteously, the Incarnation, and life, and Death of Jesus Christ as a sacrifice for the sins of the world, the hand of faith grasping the offered blessing, the indwelling in the believing souls of the Divine Spirit, and the consequent admission of man into a life of sonship, power, peace, victory, glory, the child's place in the love of the Father from which nothing can separate.

II. What Paul thought the Gospel was

- And over against this carnal might Paul lifts the undissembled (to conceal the true motives) weakness of the Cross, and declares that it is stronger than man, "the power of God unto salvation." That is a strange embodiment of divine power. Yes, and because so strange, it is so touching, and so conquering. The power that is draped in weakness is power indeed.

III. What Paul felt about this Gospel

- His restrained expression, "I am not ashamed," is the stronger for its very moderation.
- Think of what was arrayed against him . . . venerable religion, systematized philosophies, bitter hatred and prejudice, material power and wealth. These were the brazen armor of Goliath, and this little David went cheerily down into the valley with five pebble stones in a leathern wallet, and was quite sure how it was going to end. And it ended as he expected. His Gospel shook the kingdom of the Roman, and cast it in another mold.

- I know that the Christian Church has sinfully and tragically failed to present Christ adequately to the world. But for all that, **“Ye are My witnesses’ saith the Lord”**; and nobler manners and purer laws have come in the wake of this Gospel of Jesus Christ. And as I look round about upon what Christianity has done in the world, I venture to say, “Show us any system of religion or of no religion that has done that or anything the least like it, and then we will discuss with you the other evidences of the Gospel.”