

Unashamed: The Power of the Gospel and the Heart of the Reformation

Romans 1:16-17

Jerry Jackson

Well please turn with me in your Bibles to Romans chapter one. We will be taking a one week break from Hebrews, though. Certainly, Hebrews is a qualified book in teaching on the, on the Reformation and having that as our theme. However, I felt like since this is Reformation Weekend, you can't have Reformation Weekend without preaching from the book of Romans because really it gets to the heart of what everything was about, of all the things that we've been speaking of and discussing this weekend.

And really, I think if you could whittle down the main issues in the Protestant reformation that were being dealt with and that were seeking to be established. The first one is authority, right? What is our authority, right? Who do we go to or where do we go as the supreme authority to determine our faith and our practice?

Do we go to the church? Do we go to the Pope? Do we go to councils? Do we go to men? Do we rely on human wisdom? Or do we rely on the word of God? And the reformers said, it is the word of God and sola scriptura. It is the word of God alone that we must rely and depend upon for all matters of faith and practice.

The other main issue I would say is how has a man made right in the sight of God? How is a man justified? How are we saved? Is it through our own works? Is it through some combined effort between us and Christ and the saints and mother Mary and the church and the Pope and all of these other factors? Is that the way that men are saved and made right and justified in the sight of God?

Or are we saved by grace through faith? In Jesus Christ alone. And it is through Christ alone. This is what the reformers sought to establish that the only way that we can be made right in the sight of God is only through our Lord and savior, Jesus Christ. We remember from Job chapter four. That Eliphaz said, can mankind be just before God?

Can a man be pure before his maker? It is the gospel and the gospel alone that answers this question for us. And this is why we are turning today to Romans chapter 1 verses 16 to 17. We wrote this up here on the whiteboard because I, I felt like, you know, it's here. And I didn't want Chuck to outclass me, you know, so, so I had to write something up there as well.

Though I did not write it. If I wrote it, you wouldn't be able to read it, and Anna wrote it for me. So, Romans chapter one, verses 16 to 17, the power of the gospel, the very heart of the reformation, Romans one versus 16 and 17. It says there, 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.

For in it, the righteousness of God is revealed from faith for faith. As it is written, the righteous shall live by faith. Let's pray.

Heavenly Father, Lord, we thank and praise you, Lord, that you have made a way, Lord, that mankind can be just before you, Lord, that you have made a way in which men can become pure before their maker. And Lord, we know that it is not by our works. It is not by anything that we do, but it is only through our Lord and savior, Jesus Christ. Amen. Lord, only through his righteousness can we be made righteous in your sight. And so, we pray today, Lord, that you might set before us Jesus Christ and him crucified and Lord that you might cause us to put all of our hope and all of our confidence, Lord, that the source of our hope and joy would be in his righteousness that has been accounted to us. So, Lord teach us today and Lord, may we boast in nothing but in Jesus Christ and him crucified. And it is in his name that we pray. Amen.

Here in Romans chapter one, verse 16, the apostle begins his explanation of the gospel, which is what the book is about. The book of Romans is from chapter one all the way through to the end of chapter 11.

It is his explanation or his doctrine of the gospel of God or the gospel of Jesus Christ. And he begins after his greeting with verse 16, where he declares, 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. Here the apostle begins his exposition of the gospel by proclaiming his love his glory his purpose right to know nothing But Jesus Christ and him crucified. The apostle Paul received a ministry of reconciliation.

God appointed him not to baptize, but to preach the gospel, teaching men, the only way in which they can be reconciled to God. And it is in the message of the gospel that it was central to his ministry because it is in the gospel that he proclaims the only way for sinners to be saved. And this is the reason why he begins by stating that he's not ashamed of this gospel.

If his gospel teaches men how they can be reconciled to God, then why would he be ashamed of it? Right? He has no reason to be ashamed, but rather he boasts in it. He boasts in these things. But we must ask, why would he anticipate that his gospel, the gospel that he proclaims as the source of salvation, that it would be a potential for there to be shame and contempt in these things.

And this is because we understand that the gospel is glorious. Only to those who have eyes, only to those who have been regenerated by the Holy Spirit of God, only those who have a spiritual mind and spiritual eyes and spiritual ears. They see the glory of the gospel, but the world has not been taught by God, right?

They do not have the mind of Christ. So, the same gospel that is glorious to the apostle that he is not ashamed of the same gospel, the gospel that we glory in that we are not ashamed of. We'll be for us a source of foolishness and contempt as it comes from the world. First Corinthians chapter two in first Corinthians chapter two, the same apostle, the apostle Paul speaks of this reality.

That the cross, the gospel is for us, the very wisdom of God, but it is not that way for the natural man because the natural man doesn't understand the things of the spirit of God. First Corinthians chapter two, notice what he says in verses 11 to 16, for who knows a person's thoughts except the spirit of that person, which is within him.

So also no one comprehends the thoughts of God except the spirit of God. Now we've received not the spirit of the world, but the spirit who is from God, that we might understand the things freely given to us by God. And we impart this in words, not taught by human wisdom, but taught by the Spirit, interpreting spiritual truths to those who are spiritual.

The natural person does not accept the things of the Spirit of God, for they are folly to him, and he is not able to understand them because they are spiritually discerned. The spiritual person judges all things, but is himself to be judged by no one, for who has understood the mind of the Lord so as to instruct him?

But we have the mind of Christ. Right. If our goal is to be accepted, to be loved by this present world, if our goal is to have a seat at reputable worldly institutions, if our goal is not to offend unbelievers, then we will be ashamed of the gospel. Right? We'll be tempted to soften the blow. To smooth out its edges, to neglect its clear teachings, right?

To mix and to mingle elements of the gospel with elements of worldly human wisdom. This is much of what Chuck talked about all throughout the conference, right? This idea of a high view of God and a low view of man. The world doesn't like that. The world has a very high view of man, and therefore they have a very low view of God, but that is not consistent with the gospel that we preach.

The gospel that we preach, the gospel laid out in the book of Romans, has a very high exalted view of God, and it has a very low view of man, declaring that there is no one righteous, no, not one. And there is this temptation for us, in order to be more palpable, more acceptable in the world to seek to mingle and to mix the gospel or elements of Christianity and biblical truth with worldly wisdom and to compromise right here and there, right?

We talked yesterday about King Henry the fourth. Right. That Paris is well worth a mass, right? This is what he said. I will compromise on this because it is worth gaining this great city, right? This great city, and certainly many times we're able to justify such things in our own human wisdom. I mean, this is very contrary to Luther who's, who declared, right here I stand, right?

I can do no other. My mind is captive. My heart is captive to these things. I'm standing upon them. What else can I do? And so, it must be with us. We must be like the Apostle Paul. We must be like Martin Luther, who were unashamed of the gospel, but they boldly declared its truths. We cannot be ashamed, but we must do it from the rooftop in Galatians chapter 1 verse 10.

It says, am I now seeking the approval of man or of God? Or am I trying to please man? If I were still trying to please man, I would not be a servant of Christ. So, having been emphatically declared that he's not ashamed of the gospel, he now gives his reason, right? Why is it that he is not ashamed of the gospel?

We'll notice what he says. For it, the gospel, is the power of God for salvation. God has invested his supernatural, miraculous, wonder working power in the gospel of Jesus Christ. In the gospel is found the power of God that results in salvation for poor sinners. In 2 Corinthians 4, verse 6, the apostle there says, For God who said, let light shine out of darkness has shown in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.

The same power that was necessary for God to create the world out of nothing is the same power that is necessary to convert, to save dead sinners, right? Like you and me. And this is why we must contend for the miraculous power of God. Right? Anything that is anti-supernatural is anti-Bible and it is anti-God.

We cannot give up on the supernatural in order to appeal to modern scientific men. This is what happened with liberalism. We saw that as well, right? We have to give these things up because, because reasonable men, right? The age of reason has come, which was really no age of reason. It was an age of unreason is what they were.

It was an age of human reason and wisdom, but not the reason and wisdom of God. Amen. And they said, right, these men, they're not going to believe these truths. They're not going to believe that a man walked on water. They're not going to believe that someone was raised from the dead. So, we have to give those things up if we're going to appeal to them.

And we can keep the central element of Christianity and deny these miraculous things. But you can't do such things because if there is no miracle working power of God. Then there is no power of salvation, right? And the gospel is the power of salvation, right? The God of the Bible is a God who performs miracles.

The very first act of God recorded in the Bible is a mighty miracle, the creation of the world out of nothing. And we must believe in the creation of the world out of nothing. And we must also believe in the miraculous salvation of God by the power of God. And that the same power necessary to create the world is the power necessary to bring about salvation.

And who alone possesses this power? God and God alone. Right? This goes back to our high view of God, low view of man. Only God can do such things. Men cannot create. Out of nothing and men cannot save sinners. Only God can do these things, and he accomplishes both of them in the same way. By his powerful word, his word, right?

Just as in creation, there was nothing and God spoke all things into existence. So also at salvation, there was nothing. There's nothing in the center. There's nothing good there.

There's nothing that God can work with, or that God can cooperate with, or that God can come along and give a little assistance to and help so as to bring about salvation.

There is no island within the will of man or the heart of man that remains untouched by the defilement of sin. Sin has corrupted every aspect of man. Right, this comes back again. To our chart. This chart is, it's famous, right? We're going to have to print versions of this chart. The low view of man, right?

It all goes back to having a proper understanding of man. And of total depravity and what sin has done to man. What is found in the heart of man. But darkness, death, corruption, pollution. The defilement of sin. And the apostle said such things. I know that nothing good dwells in me. He says, that is in my flesh.

Romans 7 18 salvation is the result then of the miraculous power of God, a work that only God can perform from start to finish, for it takes his power to bring it about. God acts upon the center, right? The center is dead. He has nothing good in him that God can work with. His conversion must then be the result of the power of God and God uses the His powerful word to both create the universe and to convert dead sinners into living saints.

The only difference between creation and redemption is that at creation, God spoke directly. He did not use a vehicle or means to speak his word, but in redemption, God uses His servants, he uses his messengers to proclaim the word of the gospel. But where does the power lie? Does the power lie in the messenger?

Is it in the man that the power is found? No, the man is nothing. The man is insignificant. All of the power lies in the word of God. And the messenger is insignificant. He is nothing. All that matters is that the powerful word of God is proclaimed. And this is what the apostle speaks even of himself. Even though he was the greatest of the apostles, even he says of himself that he is simply a jar of clay.

He's, he's nothing. He's a servant used by God. As a vehicle or instrument for the proclamation of his word. 1 Corinthians chapter 3 verses 5 and 8. 1 Corinthians 3 verses 5 to 8. He says, what then is Apollos? What is Paul? Servants to whom you believed. As the Lord assigned to each. I planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the growth.

So, neither he who plants, nor he who waters is anything. But only God gives the growth. He who plants and he who waters are one, and each will receive his wage according to his labor. For we are God's fellow workers, you are God's field, God's building. The one who plants, the one who waters. What are they, he says.

They're nothing. They're not anything at all. Only God can give the growth. The key is in the power of God. The word of the gospel. This is where the power of God resides. Not the word of the gospel as preached by Jerry Jackson. That is nothing. Not the word of the gospel as preached by Chuck Frye. Who are, who are we?

Right? Actually, we're really nothing. Right? We're really nothing. Even in comparison to the Apostle Paul and Apollos. They were something in terms of. Relationship to us. We are absolutely nothing. Who are we? We're merely servants of God, fellow workers of God, but all of the power lies in the Lord. The man is nothing.

He is merely a vessel. He is a jar of clay, an instrument in the hands of God. The power is in the Word of God alone. In any church, any ministry, any preacher that minimizes the Word of God, that demeans the Word of God, that puts the focus of the ministry on something other than the Word of God, that ministry is going to be void of any true saving power.

And this is fundamentally the problem with so much of what we see today in modern Christianity and in American Christianity, and really in the aftermath of what took place in the reformation. Because the modern church has little to no confidence in the preaching of the gospel, they give lip service to the Bible.

They give lip service to the inerrancy of scripture, to the authority of the Bible. But in practice, they actually despise the word of God. They honor God's word with their lips. They honor the gospel with their lips, but their heart is far from it. And this is betrayed by their actions. But those who despise God's word, what are they cutting themselves off from?

They're cutting themselves off from the power of God. There is no power of God if there is no word of God found in that ministry. If the power of the word of God is not there, then what hope for salvation can be found there? And this explains why the church today has so little power, so little light, so little salt.

This week, we've talked about so many churches, That in years past, right? So many areas and regions like in Germany and Holland in Switzerland, in England, places that were bastions of truth, some of the greatest pastors and preachers and theologians the world has ever seen were raised up in those churches.

And yet today, what do we find in those same regions and areas? It is a wasteland, a desert, right? It is dry and dead. There's little to no spiritual vitality in those churches where the gospel at one point rang true. And what happened to those churches? Where did they go awry? They gave up on the word of God.

They gave up on the power of the gospel and that power was taken away. And in a generation or two, it doesn't take very long, but those things were all but lost. And those churches became nothing but. Empty, empty tombs where there is nothing at all. The gospel is the power of God for salvation. Now, will this power be known universally among all men?

Well, notice what he says. It is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes. To the Jew first and also to the Greek, though many people hear the gospel, right? Though it is proclaimed far and wide, it's power to save is not given to all who hear the gospel, but only will be found in those who actually believe the gospel.

Only those who truly believe in the true gospel, they will know the power of God. For salvation turned to Hebrews chapter four in Hebrews chapter four verses one to 13. We have here an example of those who had the good news preached to them, but it did not benefit them because they were not united in faith.

They did not believe the message that they heard Hebrews chapter 4 verse 13. Notice there what he says He says therefore while the promise of entering his rest still stands Let us fear lest any of you should seem to have failed to reach it for good news came to us just as to them, but the message they heard did not benefit them because they were not united by faith with those who listened.

For we who have believed enter that rest. As he said, as I sworn my wrath, they shall not enter my rest. Although his works were finished from the foundation of the world, for he has also spoken of the seventh day in this way. And God rested on the seventh day from all of his works. And again, in this passage, he said, they shall not enter my rest since therefore it remains for some to enter.

And those who formerly received the good news failed to enter because of disobedience. Again, he appoints a certain day today saying through David, so long afterward, the words already quoted today, if you hear his voice, do not harden your hearts. For if Joshua had given them rest. God would not have spoken of another day later on.

So then, there remains a Sabbath rest for the people of God. For everyone who has entered God's rest has also rested from His works, as God did from His. Let us, therefore, strive to enter that rest, so that no one may fall by the same sort of disobedience. For the word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword piercing to the division of soul and spirit of joints and of marrow, discerning the thoughts and the intentions of the heart. And no creature is hidden from his sight, but all are naked and exposed to the eyes of him to whom we must give an account. There, the promise of entering rest was given to them.

The good news was there among them, but it did not benefit them because they were not united with faith in those who believed. And the same may be true of us as well. We must always remember these things and stand in fear, right? As long as the Bible is faithfully taught among us, as long as it is read among us, as long as the gospel and the good news is proclaimed here among us.

There, the promise of entering rest stands before us, but simply having the word of God proclaimed is not enough, right? It is a great blessing, but it also is a great responsibility for the good news is beneficial to us. Only if. We believe it, but if we disbelieve, not if we do not believe the word of the gospel, then the rest that it promises to us will not be attained by us.

Now, in this, we must be very clear. Faith belief is not something that we produce out of our own will. Faith is not a work that we present to God that earns to us Christ's righteousness. Faith is simply the means. By which we receive the gift of salvation and though the gospel does demand faith, the gospel also implants that faith within us.

So even when the gospel demands faith, it also provides that faith as a gift from God, right? Faith is the hungry man coming to the banquet table and feasting upon the banquet, right? Faith is the parched man going to the spring of living water and drinking that water. Faith is our receiving of Christ's finished work on our behalf, trusting wholly and completely in him as our surety, right?

As our representative, as our mediator, as the only source of eternal salvation, faith sees and understands and believes in him. That the soul is reconciled to God solely and completely on the basis of what Christ has done for him. That Christ has taken his sins away. That Christ has clothed me with his righteousness.

That it is through Christ that all of the favor and the blessings of God are opened up to me. And those who believe this message, according to the apostle, will be among The Jew first and also the Greek also the power of God for salvation will be manifested among both believing Jews and also among believing Greeks or Gentiles.

And notice in Romans 1 16. Is it a different gospel for the Jews than for the Greeks? It's the same gospel. It is the same gospel that he is preaching. He does not say that there is one gospel for the Jews and there, there is another gospel for the Gentiles, but it is the same gospel for the Jews. And then also that same gospel is for the Gentiles.

The distinction between Jew and Gentile is simply in regards to the order of hearing the gospel. First, it was published to the Jews and then it later came to the Gentiles. The one way of salvation for both Jew and Gentile. And anyone who believes the gospel, whether Jew or Gentile, will know the power of God for salvation.

Romans 3, 28 30 says, Is God the God of Jews only? Is He not the God of the Gentiles also? Yes, of Gentiles also, since God is one who will justify the circumcised by faith and the uncircumcised through faith. And in Romans 10 12, he says, there is no distinction between Jew and Greek for the same Lord is Lord of all bestowing his riches on all who call upon him.

So, he is not ashamed in of the gospel. The gospel is the power of God for salvation for everyone who believes to the Jew and also to the Greek, then notice verse 17, what does the gospel reveal for in it that is in the gospel, the righteousness of God is revealed from faith for faith, as it is written, the righteous shall live by faith there in the gospel, the righteousness of God is revealed.

This is what the gospel teaches a man. It teaches us how it is. that we can attain a righteousness from God. God is a righteous God. His kingdom is a kingdom of righteousness. No sinner, nothing impure, nothing unholy, nothing polluted can dwell with God in His righteous kingdom. But only those who are holy, who are righteous, who are pure, only the clean can be with God.

It says such in Revelation 21, 27, he says there, but nothing unclean will ever enter in nor anyone who does what is detestable or false, but only those who are written in the lamb's

book of life. Nothing unclean, no one who is detestable, no one who is false. He says, none of these will enter into God's kingdom.

None of these can dwell with God for their very existence is an affront to the holiness and righteousness of God. Habakkuk, the prophet says that your eyes are too pure to see evil and cannot look at wrong. Habakkuk 1. 13, God cannot tolerate evil. His eyes are so pure that he cannot even look upon evil.

The filth of our sin and wickedness. How can God look upon us with favor when there is so much sin within us, when there is so much within us that is detestable, that is repulsive and repugnant to God, right? This is our problem. There is so much sin. And again, this goes back to yesterday's chart, high view of God, low view of man.

If we see God as he truly is, As Isaiah saw him, as the Lord high and exalted and lifted up, and he declared an imprecation upon himself, a man of unclean lips, and he has seen the God, the holy God, the righteous God, right? When we see who God is and we see who we are, what hope can we have in ourselves, right?

In our own righteousness, right? This is the fundamental question that the gospel answers. This is what the gospel reveals. How it is that a holy and righteous God, the God revealed in the Bible, how it is that such a God, one who is altogether righteous and altogether holy, how it is that this God can be reconciled to sinners like you and me.

And how it is that we, who are such sinful men, who are polluted to the very core of our being, who have about us the stench of death and sin, how it is that such impure and detestable and filthy sinners can go and dwell with God in heaven for all eternity. How is it possible for these two parties to ever be reconciled and joined together again?

With everything we know about God and His righteousness, and everything we know about man and his unrighteousness, how can these two parties ever be joined and reconciled together again? God is righteous. We are unrighteous. God is pure. We are impure. God is holy. We are unholy. He is light. We are darkness.

He is life. We are death. He is clean. We are unclean. These things are mutually exclusive. Where the one is, the other cannot be. They cannot go together. And this is man's greatest problem. Only the righteous can dwell with God. Only the pure can have eternal life. And there is nothing farther from what you and I are by nature than righteous and pure.

We are the exact opposite of all of those things. So, what hope do we ever have? Of eternal life with God who shall ascend the hill of the Lord, who shall stand in his holy place. He who has clean hands and a pure heart, and does not lift up his soul to what is false and does not swear. Deceitfully. Psalm 20, four verses three and four.

Clean hands, pure hearts, he can ascend to the hill of the Lord. Only that one can stand in God's holy place. But that's describing a righteous man. Right? A pure man, a holy man, and

not a righteous man according to our own definition, but righteous according to God's definition, according to God's standard.

In order to dwell with God, we must have perfect righteousness. We must have that righteousness that is acceptable to God according to his own definition and his own standard. And who is the standard of God's righteousness? Jesus Christ is himself. God himself is the own standard of righteousness. So, if we want to be good and if we want to be righteous and if we want to be pure and ascend to God, we have to be as good as God.

We have to be as righteous as God who could ever claim to be as righteous as God. Only an insane man could claim such things. There are some insane people out there, right? That they actually believe that this is true of them, right? We must be clear on this. We must stress this point today in our preaching of the gospel for the average person in America, right?

Even the average Christian in America believes good people go to heaven and bad people go to hell. Which I can agree with. If by good, you mean good as God, and if by bad, you mean everything else. And who would all go to hell? Everyone, right? And who would be the only one to go to heaven? Only our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

None of us would make it, but that's not what they mean. When they say good people go to heaven, who is included in the good? They are. And all of their friends and all of their family, they're all going to make it based upon their own standard, right? Well, to believe that you have to have a very high view of man, and you have to have a very low view of God.

You have to invert. Invert our chart. The average man believes that he will go to heaven because he's a swell chap. He's a good guy. His family is as well. He's sincere. He's doing his best. And as long as you try your hardest, then God will help those who help themselves. And they're going to all make it to heaven.

Now the fundamental problem in this line of thinking, one, it doesn't make any, it's insane. Okay. So that's a big problem. It's not biblical. None of it is found in the Bible. The problem is it's a faulty definition of what it means to be good. Sure, if we can set the standard of goodness, of course, we're going to set it at a place that we can meet.

Who's going to set the bar above what he can jump? But if I can set the standard, yeah, it's going to be low enough for me to limp over and make it over it. But the last I checked, I am not the creator of the universe, nor are any of you. And none of us have been appointed to be the judge on the last day of judgment.

Who has that been given to? Into who's hands has that been committed? To our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. God has appointed a day on which he will judge the world in righteousness by a man. And he has given proof of this by raising him from the dead that belongs to Christ. And he will judge men not based upon our standard of righteousness, but based upon his own standard of righteousness.

He will determine what is right and what is wrong, what is good and what is evil, what is righteous and what is unrighteous. It comes from him. It is his world, and we must play by his rules. And God is not asking us for help to determine what is acceptable in his sight. God alone will determine what is acceptable in his sight.

And his standard is perfect, spotless righteousness. If you want to be saved on the basis of your works, then go keep the law, do this and live. But what must you do? Love the Lord, your God with all of your heart, soul, might, and strength and love your neighbor as yourself from the moment of your conception to the day of your death in your heart, in your mind, in your will, in your affections, in your life, in your thoughts, in your words, in everything.

Who can live up to that standard? We can't do that for 10 seconds, much less the entirety of our life. And yet many men believe they're going to get to heaven because they are good enough. But this is not right. It is faulty thinking. It is a lie that comes from the devil, and we cannot believe it.

Sinful man's thinking is all wrong because he thinks he can be good enough. He thinks he can be righteous enough to earn God's favor. Because God isn't that righteous, and we're not that bad, so just be a good person, and it's all going to work out in the end. Right? It's like T ball. We used to do with the, our kids, with our girls, they'd play T ball.

And in our T ball league, every kid, no one struck out, no one got thrown out. If they ran the bases backward, they still scored. Right? It doesn't matter, right? Just do whatever you want. Everyone's out there running around like a bunch of monkeys. And we're all going to be winners at the end, and at the end of the day, we're all going to get ice cream.

Right? And we don't scream at anyone and say, you're miserable. You failed, right? You ran backwards. What's wrong with you? No, I would typically do that and be like, what is going on here? Right? That's T ball theology. And that's what people have when it comes to God. But we can't be like that, right? Where is this taught in the Bible?

Where does the Bible teach that God grades on the curve? Where does the Bible teach that God is pleased with our best efforts? Nowhere is this taught, but to the contrary, it is taught in thousands of places that this is not what God is like. For example, Isaiah 64, 6 7. We have all become like one who is unclean.

And all of our righteous deeds are like a polluted garment. We all fade like a leaf and our iniquities like the wind. Take us away. There is no one who calls upon your name, who rouses himself to take hold of you. For you have hidden your face from us and has made us melt in the hand of our iniquities.

What about Isaiah six five? Which Chuck mentioned yesterday. Then I said, woe is me, for I am lost. For I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips. For my eyes have seen the King, the Lord of hosts. What about Job 25 verse 5? Behold, even the moon is not bright, and the stars are not pure in his eyes.

How much less man, who is a maggot, the son of man. How can man the maggot? How can man the worm? How can one whose righteous deeds are a polluted garment? How can he who has unclean lips and lives among a people of unclean lips? How can this man have any hope of eternal life with God, if only the righteous can dwell with God?

All of our deeds, even our supposed good ones, do not commend us to God. They actually do the opposite, right? They condemn us in the sight of God. There's nothing that we can do to make ourselves righteous. So then what is the hope for sinful men? What is the solution for man? It is the gospel of Jesus Christ for in the gospel of Christ.

It is revealed how we can be made righteous. In it, the righteousness of God is revealed from faith for faith. It teaches us how sinful men can become righteous in the sight of God, how we can attain a righteousness that is acceptable to God. And the gospel shows us that only God can give this to us.

Only God can make us righteous. Only he can give to us the gift of righteousness that is acceptable to him and how he does this through faith in his righteous son Jesus Christ. The gospel teaches us how sinful, wicked, filthy, corrupt, polluted men can become righteous, holy, clean, and pure in the sight of God.

And how does this come about? Is it by our works? Is it by our best efforts? No. Is it something that we scrape together all of our money, and we give it to God and then God gives it, we purchase it from God? No, it comes to us as a gift, as a gift by faith in Jesus Christ. We can have it only as a gift that is received by faith.

And that is the power of God for salvation, right? The power of God is manifested in that he takes filthy sinners and transforms them into righteous saints. And when we come to God, we come to him as diseased, polluted, unclean sinners covered from head to toe, both inside and outside, filled with the filth of our sins and iniquities.

And God washes us with the blood of Christ and cleanses us of all of our filth. He takes all of our sins away. And then he closed us in the perfect righteousness of Jesus Christ and makes us into his saints. This is the power of God. Unrighteous men becoming righteous by the work of Jesus Christ. Our unrighteousness taken away by his death and him giving to us his own righteousness delivered up for our trespasses raised.

For our justification it says in Romans chapter 4 and that righteousness of God is revealed He says from faith for faith or from faith to faith Like the faith that receives the righteousness of God as a gift is true faith and how do we know we have true faith? It is evidenced by a life of faith. It is from faith, for faith.

Or as it is written, the righteous shall live by faith. Right? Those who have been made righteous by God will manifest in their lives through their faith. They live by faith in the Son of God. This excludes any notion of momentary faith, of temporary faith, of false faith. Such as there among the rocky soil those that were there among the thorny soil.

They had a temporary momentary faith, but it had no endurance it is true faith that receives the righteousness of Christ and that true faith will always lead to more faith Right to a life of faith the sum of the Christian life is a life of faith from start to finish This is what our life can be defined as the Christian life We do not receive the righteousness of Christ by a mere profession of faith.

We do not receive it by baptism We do not receive it by raising our hand in some service or walking down the aisle or praying some prayer He says no such thing here and we must be very clear on this as well because the modern church has also substituted true faith With a mere profession of faith.

This goes back to Phineas. And the things that we talked about yesterday that as long as you profess faith as long as you get people in a religious service and you juice everything up and you get them all fired up and you get them to do something right make some decision, right? Walk down the aisle have some religious experience then they now have punched their ticket to heaven, right?

They've guaranteed it and it doesn't matter what happens to them from that point on Right? None of those things matter anymore, but we do not receive the righteousness of Christ by mere profession of faith or by baptism or by any of these experiences. We receive it by faith in Jesus Christ. Now, I grant that profession of faith is very important.

The Apostle Paul said such in Romans 10:9 that if you confess with your mouth, Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. And it is very possible for someone to confess Jesus as Lord and for him to truly meet it. I hope that that is true of all of us.

I hope that all of us are confessing Jesus Christ as Lord right now and that we've been doing that from the moment of our conversion. That is living by faith. But is it possible for someone to make that profession at some point in their life and then to turn away from that profession and to go on and live a completely wicked life the rest of their life and not live according to the profession that they made 50 years ago at VBS when they were five years old and they walked down to the front of the aisle and had no idea what they were doing.

It's absolutely possible. And this is why it is the righteous who live by faith. How will we know and tell whether we are true professors of Christ? How do we know if we are really his followers? It is from faith to faith. Now notice there from faith to faith. He does not say it's from weak faith to strong faith.

It is from true faith to true faith and true faith. May be small, it may be weak. We may be like a dimly burning wick. But if true faith is there, what will Christ never do to that person? He will never cast him out. He will never throw him away, right? He's not saying that every single Christian is all that.

Every one of them are going to rise to the same level of maturity. That all of them will have the same measure of faith. That all of them will have the same measure of gifts and graces. But what will be found in all true believers? There will be faith. That faith may be little, it may be small and maybe insignificant, but it is there.

And over the course of their life, they always are feeding upon Jesus Christ and trusting in him. For their salvation. It is an enduring faith. The righteous shall live by faith, or as Jesus said in Luke 21, 19, by your endurance, you will gain your life. True faith has an enduring quality. It will persevere to the end.

This is the perseverance of the saints. The endurance is not what saves them in. It is not our perseverance that saves us. Who is the one that saves us? It is always and only Jesus Christ alone. He is the source of eternal salvation. But endurance manifests the reality of true faith, and it is true faith that unites us to Jesus Christ who is the source of life and righteousness and salvation.

So then here is the progression. The only way unrighteous men can be reconciled to a righteous God is by being made righteous. This righteousness is given to unrighteous men as a free gift by the mercy of God and is received by faith. The faith that leads to this justification will be evidenced by a life of faith or a life of endurance.

And this has always been the case, and it will always be the case. All of the righteous in the Old Testament, anyone who was saved in the Old Testament, we're saved on the basis of the same gospel. They were made righteous by faith in the Christ who was to come. They were made righteous by the mercy of God through, through faith.

They believed God and it was counted to them as righteousness or as Habakkuk, the prophet says, the righteous shall live by faith. This is who he quotes for, right? The proof text that he gives for what he's laying out in all of Romans is from What we would consider a very obscure, small, insignificant, minor prophet, Habakkuk.

Yet in Habakkuk chapter 2 verse 4, there the prophet proclaims, the righteous shall live by faith. In Habakkuk 2 4, the full verse says, Behold, his soul is puffed up. It is not upright within him. But the righteous by his faith. The contrast is between the self-confident. It is between the arrogant man whose soul is not right within him.

He has a high view of man. He has a very low view of God. This is the way the arrogant self-sufficient man is. And so, he relies on his own strength. He relies on his own righteousness. He relies on his own goodness on his own works to be the basis of what commends him to God to give him his standing in his approval before God.

This is what many men do. But those who rely on their own strength and their own works, it is arrogance. It is self-confidence. Their soul is not right within him. In contrast, the righteous man lives by faith. The humble man seeing that he is wholly bereft of any

righteousness, that he is only and always unrighteous in the sight of God, and that he is unable to save himself by his own efforts.

He runs to Jesus Christ, and he casts himself at his feet and he begs God be merciful to me you This is the difference between the Pharisee and the tax collector. The Pharisee was self-confident. He was arrogant. He, God, I thank you that I am not like other men, but the tax collector was humble. He relied not on himself, but he relied on God.

He said, God, be merciful to me, a sinner, the righteous shall live by faith. And in that parable, who went home justified and what is justification, but being made righteous, being declared righteous, not the Pharisee, he got nothing. Now, in his own mind, he went home righteous, but not before God. But the tax collector, who was despised in his eyes, he went home righteous because he received as a gift the very righteousness of Jesus Christ.

We live by faith in the righteousness of Christ in this reality that each and every day we have our standing before God because God has been merciful to sinners on the basis of Jesus Christ, right? Living by faith. Faith is a life of constant feasting upon Jesus Christ. It is daily trusting in him, in his righteousness as the basis of my standing and of my approval before God, that he is my surety.

He is my mediator in that every day I am accepted. I am loved. I am righteous before God on the basis of Jesus Christ. He has washed me with his blood, and I am clean. And when I sin against God, when I have my daily sins, when my feet become dirty, God forgives me. On the basis of what Christ has done for me on his sacrifice that was given for me Once for all and there is no former sin in my life There is no present sin in my life And there is no future sin in my life that can ever bring me under the condemnation of god There is no sin that can ever separate me from the love of god that I have in Christ Jesus my lord, and why is that true?

He's taken them all away. All of our sins have been removed, and they've been separated and removed from us as far as the East is from the West. I have been crucified with Christ, and it is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me. The life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God who loved me and gave himself for me.

I do not nullify the grace of God, for if righteousness were through the law, then Christ died for no purpose. Galatians 2 20 to 21. If righteousness could come about on the basis of the law, if it was possible, for men to be made righteous by law keeping then why did god put Jesus to death on the cross?

He died for nothing, but that he died on the cross proves and shows to us There's no way that we can become righteous on the basis of the law Righteousness cannot come by law keeping but only on the basis of the grace of god Given in our lord and savior Jesus Christ and this is true of us We cannot be made righteous by the law.

That's not true of us neither at our conversion nor is it true of us at any point in our Christian life, right? We have to be very clear, and we have to understand this that is the life of faith. The Apostle is living it is faith in the Son of God who loved me and gave himself up for me. This is the faith that he lives upon, right?

This is the basis of his Righteousness, and we must always remember this point because it is very easy for us to let it's up to us as Christians to think that our entrance into salvation is by the work of Christ. But now that we are Christians, it's up to us to keep ourselves in God's good favor. Many who think Christ grants me God's favor at the beginning, but now every day it's up to me, right?

It's on me. It is my good works that keep me in a good standing with God. That God is constantly looking over my shoulder each and every day. And I have to keep my nose clean. I have to walk in a certain way. And if I don't do it perfectly, then God's going to be angry with me. He's going to, to come and smack me over the head, right?

He's going to, to cast me aside. He's going to, to disown me. And so, it is up to me to appease his wrath and to please him each and every day on the basis of my works and the basis of what I do. Is that living by faith in the son of God who loved me and who gave himself up for me? No. And this is what the apostle is talking about in Galatians chapter three, in Galatians chapter three, verses one to three.

Do we begin by the spirit and then continue by the flesh, or do we begin by the spirit and continue by the spirit? We continue by the spirit the whole Christian life is by the spirit and with the spirit comes faith in Jesus Christ and with the flesh comes works of the law and it is not on the basis of works of the law that we commend ourselves to God Galatians 3 verse 1. Oh foolish Galatians Who has bewitched you?

It was before your eyes that Jesus Christ was publicly portrayed as crucified. Let me ask you only this. Did you receive the spirit by works of the law or by the hearing of faith? Are you so foolish? Have you begun by the spirit? Are you now being perfected by the flesh? Did you begin by the spirit? And are you now being perfected by the flesh, right?

There is this idea that we are born by the spirit, that it is faith that saves us initially, but then the rest of our life, we live by the flesh and that we daily have our standing in our approval before God on the basis of our righteousness, on the basis of the good works that we present to God. But is this the teaching of the apostle?

Do we begin by the Spirit and by faith, and then live by flesh and the works? And he says, no. The righteous shall live by what? They live by faith. And the faith they live by is the same faith by which they were converted at the very beginning, by which they were saved. It is the same faith, and it is always faith, in Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of sins.

His death, His resurrection, for the forgiveness of my sins. He died to take my sins away. He lives that I may be made righteous. His death and life are now accounted to me. And this is

what gives me my standing for a holy and righteous God. It was true of me on the day of my salvation. And it is true of me on the day after my salvation.

And the next day, and the next day, and every day in between. And it'll be true of us for how long? It'll be true for all eternity. Our standing before God is always and only based upon what Jesus Christ has done for us. The Christian life is about knowing and trusting and living and resting in the calm assurance that God loves me, and that God receives me as a son on the basis of Jesus Christ.

That each and every day, right, every hour, every minute, every second of the day, That I am justified in his sight. I have been declared righteous in his sight. I am loved I am accepted by god the father on the basis of what Jesus Christ my mediator has done for me That is living the life of faith That is gospel living and when we live by faith in that gospel It will always lead to gospel worship and it will lead to gospel obedience, right gospel worship Where we gather together not attempting to earn god's favor You Right?

If you came today thinking that in gathering together with God's people, you're going to get some chips from God, and then you're going to be able to cash those chips in later and get God to bless you. If that's the reason you're here, you're not doing any good. Actually, it'd be better for you to leave because you're just bringing condemnation upon yourself.

Is that why we gather together to worship God in order to get in God's good standing so that now later in life, God will bless me and give me the things that I need? Well, that's just not what we're doing. We're not gathering, attempting to earn God's favor. We're not seeking to appease his wrath and stay on his good side.

But when we gather, living by faith, we gather in freedom and liberty and peace and boldness to join together and to worship the Lord without fear, knowing that God receives me. He receives my person, and he receives my worship always and only on the basis of Jesus Christ. Amen. This is why he receives me and then gospel obedience.

Should we obey God? Absolutely, we should obey God But when we obey God are we doing so to gain his love to gain his favor to gain a standing before God? No, each day we serve God without Fear not asking not wondering not Am I doing good enough? Am I working hard enough? Did I read my Bible long enough?

Was I sincere enough and introspective enough when I was doing those things? Did I pray enough? Oh, I prayed for 15 minutes. But, oh, if I had prayed for 30 minutes, then God would really be pleased with me. Then God would really love me. Well, if 30, why not an hour? Why not two hours, three hours? Why not 10 or 15 hours, right?

You drive yourself crazy thinking these kinds of things and, and being in that way, did I do enough to avert his pleasure and to gain his approval that is not serving God without fear, that's serving God in fear. And there's a huge difference. The difference between night and day between serving God without fear and serving God out of fear, serving God out of fear.

I'm serving him in order to gain his approval. favor serving God without fear. I'm serving him because I already have his favor because I already have his love given to me and our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. We serve him. We obey him with the full knowledge and assurance that my works and my service of him adds nothing to what Christ has already done for me.

So, take my best day. There's not very many of those, but say I have my best day from my conversion to my death to my death. My best day as a Christian, where I'm thinking about the Lord, He's on my thoughts, I'm meditating on Him, I'm communing with God, right, I'm loving my wife and my children, I'm being patient with them, I'm thinking of them, putting them first, I read my Bible, and I'm filled with joy, and, and I feel close to the Lord, and I just have a zeal for God, and, and my prayers that day were sweet, and, and communing with God, and it was just a wonderful experience.

Right? My, my best day. And maybe I call one of you and tell you how wonderful you are or do something nice, right? And, and, and it's just been a day of great victory over sin and temptation and communing with God. Take that best day. Am I more accepted with God on that day? No. Because my basis of my acceptance is always what?

It's Jesus Christ and His righteousness. I'm approved by God because of Christ. And then take my worst day. You'll find more of those, and you'll find the best days where I feel cold, where I have no zeal, where it's hard for me to pray, where I don't feel like reading my Bible. I'm impatient with my wife.

I'm impatient with my children. I'm a miserable failure. Does God love me less that day because of all of my failings and sins? No, because my standing before God is not based on my righteousness. Whose righteousness is it based upon? Christ's righteousness and His righteousness is perfect. That is why my standing cannot be shaken.

That is why there is such assurance and boldness and confidence in Christ. Because His righteousness is perfect, and it cannot change, and there's stability in my relationship with God, because it's based on Jesus Christ. And then every day in between. Your righteousness, my righteousness, it is in heaven, it is sitting at God's right hand.

So, when the law comes to us, the law which is holy and righteous and good, it is a spiritual law, and it reveals to us God's righteous standard. And when we read the law though, it does condemn us. Because it shows us, we don't meet up. We don't meet up to God's standard. And when it shows us and condemns us and says you're not measuring up and when the devil and the flesh rise up against us and proclaim to us, you're not good enough.

Look at how weak you are. Look at how miserable you are. Look at how little faith you have. Look at how measly is your righteousness. How could God ever love someone like you? Seeing how weak and how little you are, then we need to answer back. You know what? You're right. I am not good enough. But guess what?

It's not based on my goodness. It's based on His. And I may not be good enough, but He is good enough. And it is He and He alone, our Lord Jesus Christ, that gives me my standing before God. I have an advocate with the Father. His name is Jesus Christ the Righteous. Jesus Christ the Righteous. He is my advocate, and His righteousness is my righteousness, and this is the basis of my standing before God. This is the basis of God's love and of His approving of me. My work adds nothing to it and my sin takes nothing away from His perfect righteousness. And that is where our standing is found.

We have to live by faith in that reality. This is what the apostle Paul is teaching. This is the very heart of the gospel and the heart of the reformation. The only way unrighteous men can have any standing before God. The only way that we can entertain any hope of dwelling with God for all eternity is by receiving a righteousness that comes not through our own works, not through our own strength, not through our own efforts, but a righteousness that comes to us from another, a foreign righteousness, an alien righteousness, right?

Something that is given to us. From outside of ourselves from our Lord Jesus Christ, who is our righteousness. So let us put all of our confidence in him, in Christ and in Christ alone. Let us depend solely upon him for he and he alone lived a righteous life for us. And there's no other way that we sinners can be made righteous only through him.

This is what the reformation is all about. This is the truth. That Martin Luther discovered that set his soul free and it is the same truth that will set us free if we live in light of its reality and this is why the scripture says those who put their hope in him will never be put to shame so let us hope in our Lord and savior Jesus Christ, let's pray.

Heavenly father Lord we stand Lord amazed Lord in your presence Lord that you would be merciful to sinners Lord, why would you do this?

Lord, we must say it is all because of your goodness and Lord, your kindness and your love. Lord, it all comes to us by your grace and mercy, because Lord, we know Lord, if we are being honest, there is nothing good in us. There is nothing that you saw within any of us that would compel you Lord to love us or to give to us your favor.

Lord, nothing. only sin, Lord, only death and darkness and evil Lord. And Lord, we even hated you. We were your enemies. And yet, Lord, at the right time, Christ came, and he died for the ungodly. Lord, we thank you that you have made a way in which unrighteous men, Lord, can gain a righteousness, Lord, that we can gain our standing before you.

And Lord, we confess that it is only through Jesus Christ. Lord, we proclaim him as Lord, Lord, as savior, Lord, as our mediator, as our high priest, Lord, we trust in his work, Lord, that he died for us, Lord, he was raised for our justification. Lord, his righteousness has been given to us. And Lord, we know that this is the basis of.

Of all of the love and favor that you have bestowed upon us Lord it has been opened up to us on the basis of your son, Jesus Christ and so Lord, we thank and praise you for these

things and lord, we want to we want to worship you And lord, we want to obey you Lord, we would if we could Lord obey you perfectly.

This is what we desire But lord, we pray that you keep us Always living a life of faith And Lord, that you might teach us that trusting and living by faith in Christ, Lord, resting in free grace, Lord, that a true understanding of that will never, never lead to lawlessness, but Lord, it will always result in, in true obedience, Lord, obedience, Lord, that is coming not out of a desire to gain your approval, But Lord, an obedience that is coming from love because of all that you've already done for us in Jesus Christ.

So, Lord, teach us the gospel, Lord, make us, make us know it Lord down to the very depths of our soul. Lord, give us a greater faith, Lord. We need it. We are men and women of little faith. And Lord, just as your disciples pray to you and said, Lord, increase our faith. So, father, we pray as well, Lord, increase our faith, increase our faith in the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

Lord, increase our faith in justification by faith, Lord, in his righteousness accounted to us, Lord, these are the things that we need to know, Lord, this is what we desire to feast upon in our souls. And Lord, we pray that we would never grow weary of hearing of Jesus Christ and him crucified. So, Father, teach us that we are only and always dependent upon him.

And that, Father, even now, we are beloved, we are accepted. Lord, we have our standing before you. Lord, even now, we are drawing near to you. Amen. Through our Lord and savior, Jesus Christ, Lord, we pray that you would receive our prayers, that you would receive our worship or that you would receive our very persons Lord on the basis of his life and his death and his resurrection and that father, you would draw near to us through him and that we might draw near to you through him and that in him.

We who are at once war and at enemies with one another at enmity, Lord, that we might be reconciled to you in his person. So, father, we thank you and praise you for Christ and for all that he's done for us. And Lord, we pray that, that this truth, the Lord, that this gospel, Lord, that it would ring out from this place and from this body, Lord, from your people.

Lord, that it would be known in our homes, Lord, among our children, Lord, that it would be known among our families and friends and Lord that you might use us to take the power of God for salvation or to a lost into a dying world. Lord, so use us and we pray that you build up your people and it is in Christ's precious name that we pray.

Amen.