

Not ashamed of the gospel.

Romans 1:16-17 “For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to everyone that believes; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek. For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, The just shall live by faith.”

Argentinian preacher, Juan Carlos Ortiz (1934-2021).

“Most churches just preach theology, and those terms are hard to understand for most people,” he explains. “You can say to someone, ‘You are a sinner,’ or you can say, ‘You have low self-esteem.’ One is insulting to you, the other makes you get help. I am using more human and modern terms to say the same thing.”

That is not the same thing. It is another gospel. Many are ashamed of the gospel of Christ because it begins by recognising we are sinners lost and without hope.

Here in Denmark, a church leadership conference has the theme, Missed and Found. The message that you are missed rather than lost is a different gospel. It is because church leaders are ashamed of the gospel that they present a gospel that does not insult those outside of Christ.

1. Not ashamed of the Gospel

A faithful preacher will not change the message so that it is more acceptable to the world.

Paul warned Timothy that the time will come when sound doctrine will not be accepted.

2 Timothy 4:2-3

“Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine. For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears;”

The gospel does not boost my self-esteem, it destroys it.

We are born dead in sin, the enemy of God, condemned and under the wrath of God.

Our condition is hopeless.

We can do nothing about it. No good work of ours can change who we are. Our condition is helpless.

There are two sides to the gospel of Christ – repentance towards God and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.

Acts 20:21 “Testifying both to the Jews, and also to the Greeks, repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ.”

Repentance sees who I am and knows my need; faith looks to who Jesus is and see the only One who can meet my need.

2. Power of God unto salvation

The Christian life is supernatural. It is the life of Christ in us. You must be born again.

John 3:3

Colossians 1:27, “To whom God would make known what *is* the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles; which is Christ in you, the hope of glory:”

You can only live the Christian life by putting on Christ and walking in new life.

Everything about the gospel is beyond human reason.

The gift of the Son of God for us is beyond expression.

2 Corinthians 9:15, “Thanks *be* unto God for his unspeakable gift.”

Thanksgiving

The riches we have in Christ are unsearchable, beyond limits.

Ephesians 3:8, “Unto me, who am less than the least of all saints, is this grace given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ;”

We search the scriptures to know Him.

Love that is beyond knowledge.

Ephesians 3:19, “And to know the love of Christ, which passes knowledge, that you might be filled with all the fulness of God.”

We put on His love.

Joy that is beyond words.

1 Peter 1:8, “Whom having not seen, you love; in whom, though now you see *him* not, yet believing, you rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory:”

We rejoice in the Lord.

Peace that is beyond understanding.

Philippians 4:7, “And the peace of God, which passes all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.”

We pray knowing He cares for us.

3. Believing is more than just acknowledging it is true.

Many misunderstand the epistle of James.

Believing is not enough.

James 2:19, “You believe that there is one God; you do well: the devils also believe, and tremble.”

Works must follow faith.

We are created in Christ Jesus unto good works, **Ephesians 2:10.**

Faith without works is dead.

James makes the distinction between dead faith and living faith.

Dead faith has no works, but a living faith always has works.

James 2:17 Even so faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone.

Does this mean that we are saved by our works and not just by faith alone?

No. Our works have no power to save.

Are we saved by faith alone? Yes.

But if there are no evidence of salvation, no fruit of the Spirit working in our life, no good works, then our faith is dead.

James 2:24 “You see then how that by works a man is justified, and not by faith only.”

Many claim to have faith but there is no evidence of the power of God working in their life. Their faith is dead.

Faith alone means total dependence upon Christ alone for salvation. The evidence of our salvation is seen by our good works.

4. Righteousness of God revealed.

2 Corinthians 5:21, “For he has made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.”

The righteousness that is revealed through the gospel is not a righteousness that condemns the sinner, it is the gift of God to all who trust fully in Christ alone for salvation.

Testimony of Martin Luther.

Finally, by the mercy of God, as I meditated day and night, I paid attention to the context of the words, ‘In it the righteousness of God is revealed, as it is written, ‘He who through faith is righteous shall live.’ Then I began to understand that the righteousness of God is that by which the righteous lives by a gift of God, namely by faith. This, then, is the meaning: the righteousness of God is revealed by the gospel, viz. **the passive righteousness with which the merciful God justifies us by faith, as it is written, ‘The righteous one lives by faith.’** Here I felt that I was altogether born again and had entered paradise itself through open gates. There a totally other face of all Scripture showed itself to me. And whereas before ‘the righteousness of God’ had filled me with hate, now it became to me inexpressibly sweet in greater love. This passage of Paul became to me a gateway to heaven. Then I ran through Scripture, as I could from memory, and I found an analogy in other terms, too, such as the work of God, i.e., what God does in us, the power of God, with which he makes us strong, the wisdom of God, by which he makes us wise, the strength of God, the salvation of God, the glory of God.”
Preface to Latin Writings [1545]