

Romans 1.14-17

“Convinced and Commissioned”

Very THANKFUL for Privilege of Being with you on this HISTORIC Sunday
500 years ago – Martin Luther launched PROTESTANT REFORMATION
Celebrate 31 October 1517 – Posting 95 Thesis to Church Door Wittenburg
Fact Checking: Not Sure of Date, PASTED Not Posted, Normal Notices

Absolute CERTAINTY Luther lit Fire 1517 Warms us in Lanzhou 29 Oct 2017
1505 Martin Luther left Law School > ENTERED MONASTERY age 21
NOT to Study Theology > but to SAVE HIS SOUL

Boyhood trembled > Frowning Face of Jesus in Church > Righteous Judge
ALL HIS YOUTH / Feared Death > FEARED JUDGMENT

DEVOTED SELF to Augustinian Orders / Fasted, Prayed, Confessed Sins
CONFESSED MOST TRIVIAL SINS / TOOK MANY HOURS at a Time
Superiors banned him from Confession Box UNTIL he has Something Serious

Meticulously followed Monkish Wisdom of Day /Self Righteous by Works

Later wrote to Duke of Saxony “If ever a monk could obtain heaven by his
monkish works, I should certainly have been entitled to it...If I had continued
much longer, I should have carried my mortification even to death”

Wise Spiritual Father / Vicar General of the Congregation / John Staupitz

“Why are you so sad brother Martin?”

“I do not know what will become of me,” Luther deeply sighed.

STAUPITZ “More than a thousand times I have sworn to our holy God to live
piously, and I have never kept my vows. Now I swear no longer, for I know I
cannot keep my solemn promises. If God will not be merciful towards me for the
love of Christ and grant me a happy departure when I must quit this world, I shall
never with the aid of all my vows and all my good works stand before him. I
must perish.”

With those SURPRISING WORDS / Staupitz sent Luther to study Scripture

TEXT WHICH JUMPED OFF THE PAGE TO LUTHER WAS Romans 1.17

1. God's Righteousness – what is the message?

GREAT THEME of this LETTER to the ROMANS > Good, Right, Just

a. Who God is – Righteousness God's Characteristic, Attribute

Luther SAW this CLEARLY in STERN FACE of JESUS on CHURCH WALL
 UTTERLY CONSISTENT, COMPLETELY FAITHFUL, ALWAYS RIGHT
 HOLY – “Your eyes are too pure to look on evil; you cannot tolerate wrong”

VERY NATURE OF GOD IS RIGHTEOUS > He Cannot DO WRONG

“You love righteousness and hate wickedness” Ps 45.7

JESUS Challenged Attackers “Can any of you prove me guilty of sin?” Jn 8.46

b. What God does – Activity, Behavior

Learn from Abraham “The Judge of all the earth will DO RIGHT” Gen 18.25

ROMANS – God's Righteousness SUPREMELY SEEN in Cross of Christ

v. 17 “For in the gospel a righteousness from God IS REVEALED”

JESUS - PERFECTLY RIGHTEOUS “I always do what pleases Him” Jn 8.29

WAS BAPTIZED “to fulfill all righteousness” Matt 3.14

FULFILLED PROPHECY OF ISAIAH “I am bringing my righteousness near, it is not far away, and my salvation will not be delayed” Isaiah 46.13

RIGHTEOUSNESS & SALVATION are SYNONMS / Keep Covenant Promise

“You answer us with awesome deeds of righteousness, O God our Savior” P 65.5

“The Lord has revealed his righteousness to the nations” Psalm 98.2

c. What God gives – Status, Position

GOD MAKES US RIGHTEOUS – THIS IS THE GOOD NEWS OF GOD!

**FIRST 2 ALONE – God is Righteous, God Acts Righteously – NOT Good News
TERRIFYING NEWS – WE'RE IN TROUBLE – WE ARE UNRIGHTEOUS**

“Rescue me and deliver me in your righteousness” Ps 71.2

“In your righteousness bring me out of trouble” Ps 143.11

What made Luther love God he previously hated / **GOD GIVES Righteousness**

JOHN STAUPITZ TO LUTHER “Look at the wounds of Jesus Christ, to the blood that he has shed for you; it is there that the grace of God will appear to you. Instead of torturing yourself on account of your sins, throw yourself into the Redeemer’s arms. Trust in him, in the righteousness of his life, in the atonement of his death. Do not shrink back. God is not angry with you; it is you who are angry with God. Listen to the Son of God”

“My mouth will tell of your righteousness, of your salvation all day long” Ps 71.15

TERM “Imputation” – Application of Righteousness of X to Sinner

JAMES BOICE “It is like putting the infinite moral capital of the Lord Jesus Christ into our empty bank account”

JOHN STOTT “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 his. 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.”

HOW does **GOD GIVE** this **RIGHTEOUSNESS**? – By Faith from First to Last

Three Elements – Knowledge, Heart Response, Commitment

KNOWLEDGE – Faith in something or someone **NOT EMPTY FEELING**

Content of our Faith recorded in Bible, Revealed in Christ

HEART RESPONSE – Expressed in LOVE for God, His Son, His Word

COMMITMENT – Not just Savior for others, MY SAVIOR, My Lord, My God

SPURGEON “Faith is not a blind thing, for faith begins with knowledge. It is not a speculative thing: for faith believes facts which are sure. It is not an unpractical, dreamy thing; for faith stakes its destiny upon the truth of revelation...Faith...is the eye which looks...Faith is the hand which grasps...Faith is the mouth which feeds upon Christ”

AUGUSTUS TOPLADY – wrote in

“Rock of Ages, cleft for me. Let me hide myself in thee. Nothing in my hand I bring, Simply to thy cross I cling; Naked, come to thee for dress; Helpless, look to thee for grace; Foul, I to the fountain fly; Wash me, Savior or I die.”

“from faith to faith” or “faith from first to last”?? / quote from Habakkuk

1. By Faith entirely
2. From the faith of the OT to the faith of the NT
3. From faith of the Jew to faith of the Gentile
4. From weak faith to stronger faith
5. From God’s righteousness revealed by faith to our faith in that righteous God

IT IS ALL GOOD / AND CONSISTENT WITH BIBLICAL TEACHING

QUOTE from Habakkuk = Faith is the WAY TO RIGHTEOUSNESS

What we are talking about DOCTRINE OF JUSTIFICATION BY FAITH

LUTHER “This doctrine is the master and prince, the lord, the ruler and the judge over all kinds of doctrines...If this article of justification is lost, all Xtian doctrine is lost at the same time...without it the church of God cannot exist for one hour”

2. Gospel Recipients – who is the message for?

Romans GOOD NEWS of God’s Righteousness for ALL PEOPLE / PLACES

a. Religious – v. 16 “Jew First”

v. 13 “other Gentiles” – Roman Church largely a GENTILE CHURCH

v. 16 “Jew First” - THEOLOGY and CHRONOLOGY

THEOLOGY - 9.4 “The people of Israel, Theirs is the covenants, the receiving of the law, the temple worship and the promises”

REMINDS THEM – Gospel is FROM the Jews and FOR the Jews

OT – Jewish Book / Jesus and the Apostles – Jewish

CHRONOLOGY – Jesus to Samaritan woman “Salvation is from the Jews”

Paul in Synagogue at PISIDIAN ANTIOCH to Jews

“We had to speak the word of God to you first. Since you reject it and do not consider yourselves worthy of eternal life we now turn to the Gentiles” A 13.46

TRAGIC REJECTION BURDENED THE HEART OF JESUS

“O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, you who kill the prophets and stone those sent to you, how often I have longed to gather your children together, as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, BUT YOU WERE NOT WILLING” Luke 13.34

PARABLE OF TENANTS CONCLUDES – Jesus strong words to Jews

“I tell you that the kingdom of God will be taken away from you and given to a people who will produce its fruit” Mt 21.43

ROMANS 9 – 11 / Paul discusses Rejection of Jews / Reception of Gentiles

TRAGEDY TODAY Most Jews think Jesus is ONLY FOR GENTILES

SURPRISING – Religious People, who were promised Messiah REJECTED

NOT SURPRISING – No Religion – NOT EVEN Christianity – CAN SAVE US

RELIGION OFTEN INFLUENCES ONE to TRUST SELF – Ex. Paul/Saul

Christian Gospel is about FULLY TRUSTING CHRIST, CHRIST ALONE

GOD'S RIGHTEOUSNESS is for RELIGIOUS / Often Too Proud to Ask for It

b. Advantaged – “Greeks” / “wise”

PRIORITY for Jews Does NOT MAKE Gospel LESS RELEVANT for Gentiles

“Greeks and non-Greeks” OBVIOUS REFERENCE TO NATIONALITY

ADDITION of Phrase “wise and foolish” SOMETHING MORE MEANT

Greeks were people of EDUCATIONAL PRIVILEGE & OPPORTUNITY

Greeks: Great Historical Epic / Philosophers / GOOD NEWS FOR EDUCATED

CONTRARY TO MODERN IDEAS – Higher Education Largely Secular

RELIGION PLAYS LITTLE OR NO PART IN MOST ACADEMIC CIRCLES

ACADEMIC World – Produces REASONS WHY should IGNORE RELIGION

EX - RELIGIOUS IDEAS RELATIVE – formed by CULTURAL FORCES

WEST – Xtian / ARAB or TURK – Muslim / ASIAN – Buddhist, Hindu, Shinto

TRUE GENERALIZATION – MANY STARTLING EXCEPTIONS

QUESTION – What about Claims of Christ and Bible? ARE THEY TRUE?

Paul spoke to Athenian philosophers / Greek academics BRUSHED OFF IDEAS

“He seems to be advocating FOREIGN GODS” Acts 17.18

TRUE – Few in Athens HEARD GOSPEL of JESUS of NAZARETH / Foreign!

PAUL “what you worship as something unknown I am going to proclaim to you”

Acts 17.23

QUESTION NOT – Is it Foreign? // REAL QUESTION – Is it True?!

EVERY TRUTH comes from SOMEWHERE / Foreign to All / from Heaven

OTHER CRITIQUES AND ATTACKS FROM SECULAR EDUCATION

These have been answered by Bible believing scholars / READ WORKS

PAUL – one of the Brilliant Scholars of his day / WISDOM OF FAITH IN X

c. Disadvantaged – “non Greeks” / “foolish”

Anyone who was not Greek was a BARBARIAN / Most of US!

LINGUISTIC – not a SOCIAL DESIGNATION – not too Offensive

Speech of Foreign Neighbors / Sounded like Stammering, Babble “bar, bar, bar”

WITHOUT Knowledge of GREEK / Cut off- Cultural & Academic Storehouse

PERHAPS YOU FELT Disadvantaged, Limited, Cut off from Opportunities

NOT ENOUGH EDUCATION, MONEY, CONNECTIONS WITH POWER

Jesus Christ NOT go ONLY to Wise, Wealthy, Influential Citizens of His Day

ALSO to EVERYDAY PEOPLE – Whoever and Wherever they Were

“Friend of Outcasts & Sinners” – carpenters, fishermen, tax collectors, prostitutes

Peter to Cornelius – “God does not show favoritism but accepts men from every nation who fear him”
Acts 10.35

Rom 2.11 “For God does not show favoritism”

CHURCH IS NOT A CLUB FOR “Our Kind of People” / WE DON’T OWN IT

CHURCH of LORD JESUS CHRIST – for All Nations

v. 15 “you who are at Rome” / MULTI-Cultural City /4 million from all World

MAY BE YOUNG PERSON Parents Drag you Here

SPURGEON in a talk to Children – “You may be young; but you are old enough to sin, and you are old enough to die”

DIVERSE Family of Faith - “Jesus, only Jesus, Savior of World”

JOHN MURRAY “The purpose of these classifications is simply that the gospel is for all without distinction of nationality or cultural development and that he as the apostle of the Gentiles is under divine obligation to preach the gospel to all.”

3. Godly Response – what must we do?

a. Debt “obligated” – an obligation that must be discharged

UNDER DIVINE OBLIGATION TO PREACH GOSPEL TO ALL PEOPLE

“Woe to me if I do not preach the gospel!” 1 Corinthians 9.17

2 Kinds Debt – 1. Taken something for Self / 2. Given something for Another**

SEMINARY STUDENT – Mission Trip to Uganda / Country at War / Collapse

Staying in Orphanage / Given Package to Carry / Difficult Travel

FINALLY PRESENTED \$30,000 TO DIRECTOR OF ORPHANAGE

I was DEBTOR / NOT MY MONEY / Given that money for the Orphanage

NOT OUR GOSPEL – From God – Must faithfully give Gospel to All People

NOT ALL HAVE GIFT OF EVANGELISM, or OFFICE OF EVANGELIST

BUT ALL BELIEVERS are RESPONSIBLE to SHARE GOOD NEWS of Jesus

v. 16 “the gospel, because it is the power of God for salvation”

MORE THAN JUST TELLS ABOUT – or Announces – God’s Saving Power

THE GOSPEL ITSELF IS THE POWER

b. Delight “eager”

SEEMS A STRANGE RESPONSE TO A DUTY – Very UnAmerican

Characteristic Response of Americans / Not Me / Nobody tells me what to do!

Paul NOT YET COME to Rome – NOT DUE to any RELUCTANCE of His

ON THE CONTRARY – he is EAGER TO PREACH IN ROME

Everyone WANTED to Visit Rome at Least ONCE – Look, Stare, Wonder
 Paul Not want to Visit as TOURIST but as an EVANGELIST – Preach Christ

BIBLICAL PARADOX – Believer WANTS to do WHAT HE HAS TO DO
 TRUE IF HE IS WISE – AND WANTS JOY AND PEACE OF GOD

TRUTH DISCOVERED by Psalmist “I rejoice in following your statutes as one
 rejoices in great riches...I delight in your decrees, I will not neglect your word”

c. Determination “not ashamed”

STRANGE TO HEAR – Apostle who GLORIED in the Cross / BOASTED!

HONEST WORDS – even an Apostle of God is part Sinner, part Saint

WRITING TO ROME – EPICENTER OF WORLDLY POWER

GOD saves through Lifeless, Broken, Naked, Bleeding Man / CRAZY NEWS!

WORDS OF CONVICTION / DETERMINATION – thought and reflection

Gets CRITICISMS, INTELLECTUAL ATTACKS, MOCKING LAUGH

FELT LIKE AN IDIOT – Porcius Festus – Roman Government Official said

“You are out of your mind, Paul! Your great learning is driving you mad” 26.24

ABSENCE OF SHAME is a PROOF of FAITH

JESUS “If anyone is ashamed of me and my words....the Son of Man will be
 ashamed of him”
 Mark 8.38

PAUL’S FAREWELL LETTER TO TIMOTHY 2 Tim 1.8

“So do not be ashamed to testify about our Lord or ashamed of me his prisoner.”

LOGICAL PROGRESSION

1. He is ready to preach the Gospel
2. He is not ashamed of the Gospel
3. Because it is the Power of God for Salvation
4. Because in the Gospel the Righteousness of God is Revealed

GOD'S SAVING POWER is Operative through the GOSPEL ALONE

Word of God living and active / Sword of the Spirit / Life Giving Good News

OPERATION – not UNCONDITIONAL or UNIVERSAL

v. 16 “everyone who believes” SALVATION APPLIED THROUGH FAITH

TO SAY “I am NOT ASHAMED” – BOLD DETERMINATION

“I have suffered ridicule, counted the costs, I stand for Jesus & Him crucified”

3 COMMON RESPONSES of Modern Believers to EVANGELISM

1. Option
2. Reluctance
3. Shame / Fear

MODERN BELIEVER “I do not have to evangelize, not my gift or interest”

PAUL “I am obligated to preach”

MODERN BELIEVER “I do not want to evangelize, no one can force me”

PAUL “I am eager to preach to all in Rome”

MODERN BELIEVER “I am ashamed to evangelize, what will people think?”

PAUL “I am not ashamed of the gospel”

1510 > 5 yrs as a Monk > 2 years Teacher of Bible Univ of Wittenburg

FULFILLED LIFE LONG GOAL > Visit to the Holy City of Rome

EAGER TOURIST > saw Shrines, Relics, Churches, heard Legends

Church of St. John Lateran in Rome / Medieval Stone Stairs

ALLEGEDLY original Staircase from home of Pontius Pilate in Jerusalem

FAITHFUL climbed “Holy Stairs” on their KNEES, praying at each point

KISSING STAINS on Stairs / Claimed to be from the Blood of Jesus

DURING this Painful Devotion / Our Text filled Luther’s mind

“The just shall live by faith” / Realized he lived by FEAR not FAITH

OLD SUPERSTITIONS fought against NEW BIBLICAL FAITH IN HIM

“By fear” said Luther

“By faith” said the Apostle Paul

“By fear” said the scholastic father’s of medieval Catholicism

“By faith” said the Scriptures

“By fear” said those who agonized with him on those stone Holy Stairs

“By faith” said God the Father

Stood & walked down stairs / Rejecting Superstition / Embracing Scripture

REAL BEGINNING OF REFORMATION / in heart of Martin Luther

few years Change of Heart / swept across Europe / eventually World

Luther echoed Paul “I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God”

Romans 1.14-17

I am under obligation both to Greeks and to barbarians, both to the wise and to the foolish. ¹⁵So I am eager to preach the gospel to you also who are in Rome. ¹⁶For 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. ¹⁷For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith for faith, as it is written, “The righteous shall live by faith.”