

“No Apologies Necessary” (Romans 1:16–17)

Every Sunday before I get up to preach I always do three things: pray, check my mic, and check my fly (not necessarily in that order). Last Sunday during our first worship service I went two-for-three. Much to my chagrin, I failed to adequately check my microphone. The lapel mic that I use has an on/off button inside the case and a mute switch on the top of the mic case. I turned the power “on,” but failed to switch the mic off mute. (This actually pleased some of our people.) What was even more surprising was I preached for forty–five minutes and never realized I had been muted. I had the full power of the mic at my disposal but I failed to properly use it. What a frustrating experience!

Do you sometimes feel powerless? Do you feel like you’ve failed to flip the “on” switch? Perhaps you sense that something in your life is just not working properly? Did you know that you have a power source at your disposal? It’s called “the gospel”—the good news of Jesus Christ. In the gospel is all the power that you need for life. *Turn on gospel power.* Unfortunately, you may not be relying upon the power source that is available to you. Perhaps you’ve been considering Christianity but you haven’t yet been persuaded. You’re skeptical or maybe even cynical. You have a lot of questions about the Bible. You also assume that Christianity is a wimpy faith designed for weak people. I’m here to tell you that the gospel is powerful. It can and will change your life. It will give you a new hope and a new future. Don’t take my word for it; believe it yourself. Maybe you’ve been a Christian for many years and the gospel is old hat to you. I need to remind you that the gospel is more than just believing in Jesus for eternal life. The gospel is the good news that Paul discusses throughout the entirety of Romans.¹ It will take you to heaven and then bring heaven down to earth. But you must believe and apply the gospel. You must allow the gospel to change you from the inside out. *Turn on gospel power.* In Romans 1:16–17 we discover the key to unlocking the letter.² In a mere two verses Paul unveils the thesis, the theme, and a summary of Romans. He also imparts four significant facets of the gospel.

1. The gospel is powerful (1:16a). The gospel doesn’t contain the power of God; it is the power of God.³ Paul begins 1:16 with the word “for” (*gar*), which ties back to 1:15.⁴ There he said, “I am eager to preach the gospel to you also who are in Rome.” Why is Paul so eager to preach the gospel? He explains, “**For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation**” (1:16a). The first question we must ask is: Why does Paul make the statement, “I am not ashamed⁵ of the gospel?” In his thirteen letters, there’s no indication that he was ever ashamed of the gospel.⁶ This phrase is a figure of speech called *litotes*, which is a way of emphasizing something by saying it negatively. For example, if you say, “He’s not a bad athlete,” you likely mean, “He’s a pretty good athlete.” Paul is actually saying, “I’m proud of the gospel; I triumph in it more than anything else.”⁷ However, the great apostle is a realist and recognizes that this may not be the case for many of his Roman readers. Rome was the capital of the world. It was the seat of world culture and pride, the essence of pomp and power, the city set upon seven hills. To preach a God who became a man through a virgin birth, died as a criminal on a cross, rose bodily from the dead, went to live in heaven, and would return to earth one day didn’t make sense to sophisticated Romans.⁸ In fact, the cross would have been particularly offensive to the Romans.⁹ Only the worst types of criminals were crucified. Roman citizens were not allowed to be crucified. It was too degrading, and it would disgrace the empire for one of its citizens to be executed in this way. Hence, the people of Rome were shocked and appalled by the gospel. How could a crucified criminal be a Savior? It was abhorrent and unthinkable! So you can imagine the temptation of Paul’s recipients to be ashamed of the gospel. Moreover, the preaching of the gospel invited persecution.¹⁰ The capital city of the empire was steeped in immorality and paganism, including emperor worship. To claim Jesus as the only way to God could get you killed. Most Romans would despise believers in Jesus Christ and probably do them harm.¹¹ So when Paul writes, “I am not ashamed of the gospel” he explains that the wisdom and sophistication of Rome will not intimidate him, nor will the threat of physical injury or death.

Today in Thurston County there are several reasons why people feel ashamed of the gospel: fear of losing face, fear of losing friends, fear of being labeled a fanatic, fear of taunting and scorn, fear of losing influence, etc. However, we have many bold believers in our church. They are infiltrating public schools, state agencies, businesses, and neighborhoods. This past week Andy Schwartz was sharing with me some opportunities he has had to share his faith with boilermakers he works with. Talk about a rough crowd! Whew! Andy carries a small Bible in his shirt pocket and there have been times when one of the men is cursing a blue streak or telling a dirty joke, and lo' and behold Andy leans over, and his Bible falls out. Andy then says, "Oh, there's my Bible. I better pick it up." He is unashamed! He refuses to back down from anyone. (It helps that Andy is a 6'3" stud.) I don't know about you, but bold believers like Andy fire me up. When I am in their presence or hear of their exploits, my fear dissipates. I feel courageous and excited to share Christ. There are many believers like Andy who share their faith throughout our community. We need these courageous believers to rub off on us. We need to share with one another how God is using us to speak up for him. Instead of always talking in the foyer about news, sports, entertainment, work, let's talk about Jesus and how He has used us to share our faith in the past week. When we learn to share our witnessing successes and failures at church we'll challenge and inspire one another. Furthermore, we'll be more comfortable talking about Jesus outside of our church walls.

Paul isn't ashamed of the gospel because "it is¹² the power of God." Did you catch that? The gospel releases "the power of God."¹³ That's why Paul says we ought not apologize for the gospel. Why apologize for releasing the power and blessing of God in someone's life? That's nothing to be sorry about. Unsaved people don't stutter when they swear. They come right out with it. They don't shuffle their feet and clear their throats when they tell dirty jokes. They are not ashamed of evil. You and I ought not be ashamed of the gospel. I don't hear anyone else apologizing for or being ashamed of their lifestyles. We live in a day when people go public with their evil. The sense of shame that used to characterize wickedness has been lost. People used to at least try to hide when they sinned. Now they take it out into the streets. What I'm saying is that we need to be just as bold with the gospel, because people need the message of the gospel more than ever today.¹⁴

Unbelievers and believers alike need the gospel because "it is the power of God for salvation." Like the term "gospel" (*euaggelion*),¹⁵ "salvation" (*soteria*)¹⁶ isn't limited to those central truths by which a person is given eternal life. Salvation is a broad concept that encompasses three tenses: past, present, and future. When salvation occurs a believer is saved from the penalty, power, and presence of sin. This means every believer is saved to a new position, a new life, and an entrance into God's heavenly presence.¹⁷ For Paul, "salvation" and "saved" are umbrella terms that capsule all the aspects of his letter (i.e., justification, redemption, reconciliation, sanctification, glorification).¹⁸ Therefore, we can conclude that Paul is expressing his confidence that the truths that will be presented in Romans provide God's power to deliver us from enslavement and bondage to sin. In other words, the "gospel" and "salvation" are not just for heaven, they are also for earth. God yearns to bring heaven down to earth in your experience. *Turn on gospel power.*

How can you *turn on gospel power*? (1) Believe in Christ alone for salvation. Cross over from death to life (John 5:24) and receive power for this life and the life to come. (2) Ask God for opportunities and boldness to share your faith. You won't find opportunities to witness if you're not looking for them. Pray for divine appointments and open doors. Remove the pressure; you're not called to be a defender but a witness. Just tell others what Jesus has done for you (cf. John 4:28-30). Dwight L. Moody commented that the gospel is like a lion. All the preacher has to do is to open the door of the cage and get out of the way!¹⁹ (3) Cultivate a hot heart. Have you ever had a friend who's engaged? Engaged people go off! They can't hold back. Now, there's no class offered on how to declare the news of your engagement to a friend. The only thing that's needed is a class on how to shut them up! Our problem is we're too familiar with gospel, so we're not motivated, compelled and captivated by the good news. We must pray that we'll be moved by the power of the gospel as if we have just heard it for the first time.²⁰ *Turn on gospel power.*

[The gospel is powerful because it is the very power of God. A second facet of the gospel is . . .]

2. The gospel is simple (1:16b). The most astonishing message ever shared with humankind is “good news” that is offered as a free gift with no strings attached. Paul states that the power of the gospel is available “**to everyone who believes.**” The sole condition of the gospel is belief. It is so simple that many people will miss it altogether. Belief occurs when you trust in someone else. If you know what it means to believe a doctor when he says, “You need surgery,” you know what it means to believe. If you know what it means to step into an airplane entrusting your safety to the captain in the cockpit, you know what it means to believe. If you know what it means to ask a lawyer to plead your case in court, you know what it means to believe. If you know what it means to sign up for an insurance policy, you know what it means to believe. Belief is complete reliance upon another person to do that which you could never do for yourself. It is trusting in this person because you are persuaded of his or her promise.²¹

One of my great concerns is that many scholars, churches, and pastors are muddling the gospel. They are including in the gospel the responsibilities of a disciple. When we include baptism, public confession, church membership, and any form of good works with the gospel, we cancel out the sole condition of belief. Why do I say that? Because Christ plus anything equals nothing ($C + A = N$), but Christ plus nothing equals everything ($C + N = E$). We can’t add one single condition to the gospel other than belief. Have you believed in Christ alone? If you’ve trusted in Christ to bear the penalty for your sins, you’ll spend eternity with Him. I urge you to make sure that you’ve done so. *Turn on gospel power.*

[We will not discover a third facet of the gospel. Not only is the gospel powerful and simple . . .]

3. The gospel is universal (1:16b). Since Jesus is an equal opportunity Savior His salvation is available to every tribe, tongue, people, and nation.²² Paul writes that the gospel is “**the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek.**”²³ Last time I checked, the word translated “everyone” (*pas*) means everyone. While the gospel is for everyone, Paul states that it is “to the Jew first and also to the Greek.” Paul uses this phrase to humble Jews and Gentiles who were at odds with one another in the Roman house churches. He wants to make them deeply aware that they depend entirely on mercy, not on themselves or their tradition or ethnic connections.²⁴ Paul wants Gentile Christians to understand several truths: (1) The Jews are the historic chosen people of God.²⁵ (2) The Jews are the guardians of the Old Testament Scriptures. (3) Jesus Christ is a Jewish Messiah. (4) “Salvation is from the Jews” (John 4:22). (5) God will again focus His program on the Jews during the Tribulation period. Gentiles are not saved by Greek culture—or any other culture; they are saved by a salvation that comes through the Jews. This should humble us and strip us of any arrogance and boasting in any presumed ethnic superiority. Whether we fully recognize it or not, we are truly indebted to the Jews. Similarly, Paul says to the Jews, your salvation isn’t your own. It’s God’s and He gives it to whomever He pleases. The words “also to the Greek” (1:16b) would have been as offensive to the Jews as the words “to the Jew first” were to the Gentiles. The Jewish Christians needed to recognize that what they thought were Jewish prerogatives were, in fact, shared by the lowliest Gentiles who believed. Jews must humble themselves to receive unclean Gentiles into full covenant membership and to share all the blessings of the promises of Abraham. Moreover, during the church age (Acts 2–present), God’s primary aim is to graft Gentiles into His family. Jewish Christians must respect this work and cooperate with it.

Although the pattern of Paul’s ministry was to go and preach to the Jew *first* (Acts 13:45–46; 28:25, 28), this does not seem to be the order for the church age.²⁶ The Great Commission makes no distinction between Jews and Gentiles in the present age (Matt 28:19–20). Jesus Christ has charged Christians with taking the gospel to everyone. He has identified no group to which we must give priority in evangelism.²⁷ Certainly we are still to proclaim the gospel to the Jews, but this phrase does not imply that we are required to evangelize the Jew before to the Gentiles. Even in context this phrase is preceded by the non-exclusive word “everyone.” The gospel is offered freely to all who will believe.

One Mercedes Benz TV commercial shows their car colliding with a cement wall during a safety test. Someone then asks the company spokesman why they don't enforce their patent on the Mercedes Benz energy-absorbing car body, a design evidently copied by other companies because of its success. He replied matter-of-factly, "Because some things in life are too important not to share." This is true of the gospel, which saves people from far more than auto collisions.

But perhaps you're feeling discouraged by the lack of believers in your county. Take heart and adopt a global and historical perspective. In 1900, there were about ten million Christians in Africa. By 2000, the number had grown to 360 million. By the 2025, the best estimates say there will be 630 million Christians in Africa. The numbers are even larger in Latin America and Asia. But by the middle of this century, if the Lord tarries, only one-fifth of the world's Christians will be western Caucasians. Most Christians will be people living in what we call the Third World.²⁸ I share this to remind you that if you are a Caucasian, you will most likely be a minority in the heavenly state. Thus, we must do everything we can to ensure that our churches accurately resemble the eternal state. There are men, women, and children of different color, class, and background waiting to be reached with the gospel. Are you presently stretching yourself to reach out to those who may be different from you? God yearns to use you to share Jesus with others. *Turn on gospel power.*

[The fourth and final facet of the gospel is . . .]

4. The gospel is vital (1:17). The goal of the gospel is to change your life. Hence, it is absolutely vital for both this life and the life to come. Paul explains: "**For in it** [the gospel] **the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith; as it is written, 'BUT THE RIGHTEOUS man SHALL LIVE BY FAITH.'**"²⁹ Paul uses the word "for" (*gar*) to link his powerful gospel with the "righteousness of God." This is the key phrase in the book of Romans, and it's used a total of eight times.³⁰ In this context, the phrase reminds us that the "righteousness of God" is present in the gospel.³¹ Salvation is this: God declaring a sinful person righteous because of the person and work of Jesus Christ. The moment the Lord declares the sinner righteous, He then gives this person His righteousness.³² As a result, when God looks upon you, He sees the very righteousness of His Son.

In 1:17a, Paul suggests that this "righteousness of God" is revealed in other ways than by merely saving sinners. The expression "from faith to faith" is interesting and important.³³ Faith has its origin, but it also has its out workings. The Christian life begins with faith and initiates a life characterized by an ever-growing faith. Or simply, those who are already justified will find a rich experience of life only as they trust God. Let me attempt to illustrate this with another concept—love. Love is the basis for marriage. Love leads to marriage. Marriage then becomes the context in which a man's love for his wife (and her love for him) grows. Marriage begins with love and continues to grow and express itself in love. Married life is "from love to love," just as the Christian life is "from faith to faith." The "righteousness of God" Paul says, is revealed "from faith to faith."³⁴ This "righteousness of God" is revealed when individuals come to faith and live by faith. This means: (1) When things are bad at home we don't lose heart. We keep trying do what is right and trust that God will bring new life to our homes. (2) When finances are tight we evaluate our spending habits and try to learn how to be good stewards of our money, and then trust God to supply our needs. (3) When the future is uncertain and we don't know what direction God is leading us, we continue to walk through open doors and trust that He is leading us to where we need to be. (4) When our physical frame begins to decay we look for new ways to serve the Lord and trust that God still has some work for us to do. (5) When people criticize us we listen and try to learn anything we can, and then we entrust ourselves to the Lord to help us live with integrity and conviction. (6) When friends pressure us to do what is wrong, we turn away from these temptations understanding that doing what is right is more important than doing what is popular. (7) When someone we love dies we draw comfort from our assurance that there is life beyond the grave, and we trust that God will help us cope with the ache in our soul.³⁵

Paul seals the deal in 1:17b by citing from Habakkuk 2:4: “But the righteous man shall live by faith.”³⁶ Habakkuk had protested to God that Judah was corrupt, that God’s Law was ignored, and that justice was swallowed up by violence and wickedness. He asked God why He had not come to save His people. God responded in a way that Habakkuk never imagined. God was going to chasten His people with a strong and cruel people—the Chaldeans. They would sweep down on Judah and take these rebellious people into captivity. The cruelty and sin of the Chaldeans would not be excused or overlooked however, for God would punish this people for their pride and arrogance. Habakkuk was horrified! He could not understand how God could use wicked men to achieve His purposes. The Chaldeans, in his mind, were even more wicked than the people of Judah. Habakkuk determined to “file a protest with God.” He knew he would be rebuked, but he planned to challenge God’s rebuke as well. In Habakkuk’s mind God had a lot of explaining to do.

God assured Habakkuk that His plan was fixed and coming without delay in spite of Habakkuk’s protest. The Lord told Habakkuk that he would have to live his life, day by day, by faith. Habakkuk might not see the day of Israel’s restoration and blessing, but by faith he must believe the Lord’s promises would be fulfilled. His days might be lived out beholding the victory of the Chaldeans and the defeat of his people, but this too must be handled by faith. He must, by faith, understand that Judah’s defeat by the Chaldeans was the chastening of God and was the outworking of God’s good plan and purposes for His people. Faith was, for Habakkuk, and for every other Old Testament believer, the rule of the day, the rule for life. So it is for the New Testament saint as well. All who are justified by faith must continue to live by faith.

As I meditated on this text from Hab 2:4, I couldn’t help but think that our country may quickly find ourselves in a situation like Judah. God has been immeasurable patient and gracious with us. He’s given us power, position, pleasure, and prosperity. Yet, we have ignored Him and are now actively rejecting Him. Eventually, God’s patience will run out. Consequently, I suspect that He will one day judge America by calling one of our enemies to serve as His chastening tool. The question is: Will you and I continue to live by faith when this occurs? Will we trust God’s purposes and continue to live obedient lives fully surrendered to Him?

At a circus a huge elephant was tied to an 18–inch stake. Could he not easily have pulled it out of the ground and be free? Sure! But he had tried it when he was a baby and was unsuccessful. The elephant had concluded that he could never pull the stake out of the ground. So there he stood, a massive creature capable of lifting whole trees, held captive by a puny stake. Many of us are like that elephant. God has given us all the resources we need to pull stakes out of the ground, but we’ve never trained our mind by exercising our faith. What small stake could faith release you from? It may be a frustrating job, financial troubles, depression, or an addiction. However large it may seem, in reality it’s merely a small stake to God. It’s not that we’re big and strong in ourselves, because we’re not; but God blessed us with the power of countless elephants when He gave us the gift of salvation. So let’s remember the power of the gospel and let it transform our lives.

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Scripture References

Romans 1:16–17

Romans 10:5–13

1 Corinthians 1:18–31

2 Timothy 1:8–18

Luke 24:13–36

Isaiah 55:11

Habakkuk 2:1–5

Study Questions

1. When have I been ashamed of the gospel (Romans 1:16a)? What caused my embarrassment? What are the primary reasons that I have been ashamed? How can I better prepare myself so that it won't happen in the future? Read Acts 4:31; 9:27–28; 13:46; 14:3; 18:26; 19:8; Ephesians 6:19–20; and Philippians 1:19–20.
2. What is the gospel (Romans 1:16b)? Can I express its elements succinctly and clearly (i.e., Christ's person/work and the necessary response of faith)? Will I make a commitment this week to master presenting the gospel to children and adults? Who can help train me to boldly and clearly present the good news of Jesus?
3. Am I striving to share Christ with all men and women (Romans 1:17a)? Who have I recently shared Christ with that has a different background than me (e.g., color, class, education)? How did they respond? In what ways was I able to cross potential barriers?
4. How would I define "the righteousness of God" (Romans 1:17a)? How do I react when I think of the righteousness of God being freely given to me through the power of God? What feelings, if any, rise up in my heart? What response, if any, ought this to evoke in my soul?
5. How am I progressively growing in my faith/faithfulness (Romans 1:17b)? How consistent has my Christian growth been since I first trusted Christ as my Savior? To what degree have I grown spiritually since last year at this time? What is the one area in my life that is holding me back in my faith? How can I deal with this area? Who can help me?

Notes

¹ René A. Lopez, *Romans Unlocked: Power to Deliver* (Springfield, MO: 21st Century Press, 2005), 38.

² Boice wrote that these verses (Rom 1:16–17) “are the most important in the letter and perhaps in all literature. They are the theme of this epistle and the essence of Christianity.” James Montgomery Boice, *Romans* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2005), 1:103.

³ Kenneth Boa and William Kruidenier, *Romans*. Holman New Testament Commentary (Nashville: Holman Reference, 2000), 33. Morris writes, “The gospel is not advice to people, suggesting that they lift themselves. It is power. It lifts them up. Paul does not say that the gospel brings power, but that it is (present tense= continually) power, and God’s (omnipotent) power at that.” Leon Morris, *The Epistle to the Romans* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1988), 68.

⁴ Unfortunately, the NIV omits the conjunction *gar* (“for”) that links Rom 1:16 with 1:15.

⁵ The adverb *ou* (“not”) indicates absolute negation and strongly denies the possibility that Paul might ever be ashamed of the gospel. The verb “ashamed” (*epaischunomai*) is also in the present tense indicating this was Paul’s continual attitude. See Paul’s use of *epaischunomai* in Rom 6:21; 2 Tim 1:8, 12, 16.

⁶ Paul gloried in the gospel (Rom 5:2, 11; 2 Cor 10:17; Gal 6:14; Phil 3:7). Morris, *The Epistle to the Romans*, 66.

⁷ Paul Barnett, *Romans: The Revelation of God’s Righteousness* (Scotland, UK: Christian Focus, 2003), 36; Michael Eaton, *Romans*, forthcoming.

⁸ George R. Knight, *Exploring Romans: A Devotional Commentary* (Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald, 2010), 44.

⁹ See Acts 17:32; 1 Cor 1:18, 23.

¹⁰ Schreiner writes, “The hesitancy to ‘bear witness’ to the gospel was rooted in fear of suffering harm. The asseveration that Paul is not ashamed in Rom. 1:16, therefore, refers both to his willingness to confess the gospel in public and the overcoming of fear. These are not empty words in Paul’s case since he had already endured much suffering (2 Cor. 11:23–27).” Thomas Schreiner, *Romans*. Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1998), 60.

¹¹ Herrick suggests another possibility: “In 6:1, 15, the apostle is warding off the possible conclusion that the gospel leads to antinomianism, i.e., the perception that ‘belief in the gospel of God’s grace leads to a life of fleshly indulgence.’ In other words, ‘if you believe a gospel that is apparently antithetical to the law, and doesn’t demand continuous works of the law, you will of necessity become lawless.’ This lawlessness, of course, would be something to be ashamed of. But, here in the opening of the letter, Paul wants to make it clear that his gospel is able to deliver the believer from sin; it is nothing less than the *power of God* and for that reason he is not ashamed.” See also Greg Herrick, “Study and Exposition of Romans 1:16–17”: www.bible.org/seriespage/study-and-exposition-romans-116-17.

¹² Paul makes his statement emphatic with the inclusion of the state of being verb *estin* (“it is”).

¹³ There are thirteen occurrences of the phrase “power of God” in NT (Matt 22:29; Mark 12:24; Luke 22:69; Acts 8:10; Rom 1:16; 1 Cor 1:18, 24; 2:5; 2 Cor 6:7; 13:4; 2 Tim 1:8; 1 Pet 1:5).

¹⁴ Tony Evans, *What Matters Most* (Chicago: Moody, 1997), 325–26.

¹⁵ The noun *euaggelion* (“gospel”) is used nine times in Romans (1:1, 9, 16; 2:16; 10:16; 11:28; 15:16, 19; 16:25).

¹⁶ The noun *soteria* (“salvation”) is only used five times in Romans (1:16; 10:1; 10; 11:11; 13:11).

¹⁷ Lopez, *Romans Unlocked*, 39 writes, “Thus, one is hard pressed in Romans to define *salvation* as justification (as commonly done in Eph 2:8–9). Hence the connection of v 16 with v 18 becomes vitally important since *salvation* and *wrath* are linked at the inception and theme of Romans. Paul defines this *salvation* from the beginning as *deliverance from God’s present wrath brought by sins*. Therefore, in Romans, it serves the interpreter best to understand and translate *salvation* as *deliverance*, which focuses more on freeing the believer from sin’s grip.”

¹⁸ Thomas L. Constable, “Notes on Romans” (2010 ed.): www.soniclight.com/constable/notes/pdf/romans.pdf, 13. The terms “save” (*sozo*) and “salvation” (*soteria*) have different shades of meaning in the NT. (1) Deliverance from sickness (Matt 9:21–22; Mark 5:23, 28, 34; 6:56; 10:52; Luke 8:36, 48, 50; 17:19; 18:42; John 11:12; Acts 4:9; 14:9; Jas 5:15); (2) deliverance from physical death (Acts 27: 20, 34); (3) deliverance from enemies (Luke 1:70, 71); (4) deliverance from political bondage and physical, national danger (Jude 5); (5) deliverance from the ravages of false teaching (1 Tim 4:16); (6) deliverance from spiritual defeat/non-Christian responses in trials (Phil 1:19; 2:12b, 14; and (7) deliverance from wrath of the tribulation (1 Thess 5:9). See John Hart, “The Letter to the Romans,” unpublished class notes (2010 ed.), Moody Bible Institute.

¹⁹ Quoted in Robert Mounce, *Romans*. The New American Commentary series (Nashville: Broadman, 1995), 70.

²⁰ A good exercise would be to study Luke 24:13–36, the Emmaus Road account. Note especially 24:32. By meditating and focusing on the person of Jesus Christ, the heart will retain its heat.

²¹ A great example of this is found in Gen 15:6, where Abraham “believed in the LORD; and the LORD reckoned Abraham’s faith as righteousness.” It was belief—nothing more, nothing less.

²² See Rev 5:9 and 14:6. As Herrick notes, “Paul insists that the *offer* is universal, but *participation* is limited to those who trust.” Herrick, “Study and Exposition of Romans 1:16–17.”

²³ I love how Thomas pens it, “The gospel is for everyone, from every sin, at every time, in every place, under every circumstance.” W. H. Griffith Thomas, *St. Paul’s Epistle to the Romans* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1946), 61.

²⁴ Paul discusses this matter further in Romans 11:17–32.

²⁵ Furthermore, Israel must repent before the messianic kingdom will begin (Zech 12:10).

²⁶ Hart, “The Letter to the Romans.”

²⁷ Constable, “Notes on Romans,” 14.

²⁸ Doug McIntosh, “Foundational Convictions for a Life That Matters” (Rom 1:13–17):

www.cornerstonebibch.org/html/Sermons/RomOne/RomOne03.pdf

²⁹ The MT (Hebrew OT) reads: “The righteous person by his faithfulness shall live.” The LXX (Greek OT) reads: “The righteous person by my [God’s] faithfulness shall live.” Paul quotes the text in a more open way, so that “by faith” can be understood as referring to the noun (“the righteous person who is righteous by faith”) or the verb (“shall live by faith”). Either way the text underscores the importance of faith. James D. G. Dunn, *Romans: A Guide for Reflection and Prayer* (Peabody, MA; Hendrickson, 2007), 25.

³⁰ “The righteousness of God” occurs eight times (1:17; 3:5; 21, 22, 25, 26; 10:3 [twice]).

³¹ Lopez, *Romans Unlocked*, 40–41: “One may understand the expression *righteousness of God* in a broad sense as referring both to His judicial acceptance, granted ‘to all and on all who believe’ (3:22), and His delivering activity, given in resurrection-power (6:1–14) through the Spirit that enables the believer to live righteously (8:1–17). Perhaps Paul may be thinking of God’s righteousness, connected in numerous Old Testament deliverance texts, whereby God *delivers* His people on the basis of His *righteousness* (Pss 40:10–13; 71:1–3, 16, 19, 24; 98:2; 119:123; Isa 46:13; 51:5–6, 8; cf. Lopez, *OT Salvation—From What?* 49–64). Unlike the Old Testament era, now God, the Holy Spirit, comes to indwell all believers at the moment of justification (8:9; John 3:1–8) to empower them in order to overcome the experience of sin (Rom 8:1–13). Once believers appropriate God’s power, they will immediately experience deliverance from His wrath brought by sins. Thus, the *righteousness of God* should not only be understood as a legal declaration, upon faith alone in Christ alone, but as also bestowing all believers with resurrection-power through the Spirit’s indwelling that aids them to live righteously (6–8; 12:1–15:13, see BDAG, 249) and escape God’s present wrath (1:18; 5:9–10; 10:9–14; 13:4–5).”

³² Harold W. Hoehner, “Romans” in *The Bible Knowledge Word Study* (Colorado Springs: Victor, 2006), 130. Moo appeals to the imagery of the law court to make the point: “To use the imagery of the law court, from which righteousness language is derived, we can picture God’s righteousness as the act or decision by which the judge declares innocent a defendant: an activity of the judge, but an activity that is a declaration of status—an act that results in, and indeed includes within it, a gift.” Douglas J. Moo, *The Epistle to the Romans*. New International Commentary of the New Testament Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1996), 70.

³³ Schreiner, *Romans*, 71–72 conveniently summarizes the many options: “Most interpretations include the idea of a progression from one kind of faith to another: from the faith of the OT to the faith of the NT; from the faith of the law to the faith of the gospel; from the faith of the preachers to the faith of the hearers; from the faith of the present to the faith of the future; from the faith of words we hear now to the faith that we will possess what the words promise; from the faithfulness of God to the faith of human beings; from the faithfulness of Christ to the faith of human beings; from smaller to greater faith; from faith as the ground to faith as the goal?” See F. F. Bruce, *The Letter of Paul to the Romans*, rev. ed. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1985), 76; Morris, *The Epistle to the Romans*, 71–72; Moo, *The Epistle to the Romans*, 76–79.

³⁴ The NIV translates this phrase “by faith from first to last.”

³⁵ Bruce Goettsche, “Not Ashamed” (Rom 1:16–17): www.unionchurch.com/archive/050904.html.

³⁶ Hab 2:4 is also quoted in Gal 3:11 and Heb 10:38–39.