

Bible Study Romans 1:16-17

1. Do you find it easy to talk to others about Jesus? What word would you use to describe your attitude to sharing your faith?

2. **Read Rom 1:14-15.** What do you think Paul meant when he wrote that he was “obligated” (literally, “indebted”) to people?

This is not a sense of obligation motivating him to preach. It means that God has entrusted him with something that is for other people. Until he gives it to them, he's “in their debt”. A bit like someone giving you a large sum of money for a relative who is in great need of it. You “owe” that relative the money and you are indebted to them until you give it to them.

3. Verse 16 begins with the word “For” (the NIV translators chose to leave it out). **Read Rom 1:14-17 adding the word “for” at the start of v16.** What difference does it make to add the word “for”?

It connects Paul's attitude towards the gospel to his activity of and attitude towards proclaiming it. Vv16-17 are his explanation of why he is eager to preach the gospel in Rome (and anywhere else!)

4. Read the following verses and discuss what it means to “be ashamed” or “not ashamed” of the gospel. Mark 8:38; Rom 6:21; 2 Tim 1:8, 12, 16; Heb 2:11, 11:16. Also read Rom 5:5, 9:33 where “disappoint” and “shame” are translating a Greek word with the same root as the word in 1:16.

Shame is that which makes you want nothing to do with someone or something – either something about you or them is embarrassing, dishonourable, shameful. To not be ashamed of the gospel will mean that you are not afraid to be associated with it, the Lord it proclaims, and anyone else who proclaims it. It also means that you yourself are not shamed by it – left in a good standing before God and Jesus.

5. What other ways **might** God have chosen to exercise his power on earth? Why do you think he chose a message (the gospel)?

God could use angels, flashes of lightning, earthquakes – pretty much whatever he wanted to! But God is the God who speaks – who always has (from Gen 1 onwards!) and he relates to his creation by speaking. We are created in his image, able to communicate through words – by hearing and trusting. This is the basis of human relationships. When we hear and trust God's message, we are fundamentally acting as God's image bearers. When rebels put their trust in the word of the One they'd rejected, there is the power of God at work.

6. Is this how you usually think of the gospel message? What difference would it make to your answers to Q.1 if you were deeply shaped by the truth expressed in v16?

7. The gospel is God's revelation of how to be put into a right relationship with him (v.17). Paul says that, in the gospel, this righteousness **is being revealed** (present tense). What does this mean?

Right standing with God is being revealed ie offered in the ongoing preaching of the gospel.

8. What do you think it means that this is “by faith from first to last”?

Possibly from God's faithfulness to our faith ie God is the origin of saving faith. Or that from the moment of conversion till the moment we stand before Jesus, righteous and forgiven, our right standing is solely on the basis of faith – we never “progress” from faith to our own physical righteousness ie our own works or good deeds.

9. If Paul was “eager” to preach the gospel and “not ashamed” of it, does that mean he never found it difficult to actually preach it? On a scale of 1 – 10, where 1 is totally unlike and 10 is very similar, how do you think Paul would compare to us and our answers in Q1?

Discuss first then read Rom 15:30-31; 1Cor 2:1-3; Eph 6:19-20; Col 4:4; 1 Thess 5:25; 2 Thess 3:2; 2 Tim 4:17. Paul knew what it was to face fear from opposition and attack – why else would he ask for prayer about his sharing the gospel? Who ever asks for what they already have? Be encouraged – if you don't feel bold, you are in good company! Remember to pray for boldness! And pray for each other.

Spend time praying that we will be both eager and bold in the coming week. Perhaps pray for one specific situation or relationship in the week ahead.