

Romans 1:16-17 - Part 2

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[0:00] Salvation from sin and its penalty and salvation from a severed relationship with our Creator is our greatest need.! You see, we need to be saved from sin itself. Sin is the poison in our system and in all the systems of the world.

This world, right alongside us, longs for the day that it will be set free from the infection that is sin.

Paul writes in Romans 8 verse 19 and then skip a two for brevity, verse 22.

He says, for the creation waits with eager longing for the revealing of the sons of God. For we know that the whole creation has been groaning together in the pains of childbirth until now.

Everything that is wrong in this world is because of sin and we need to be rescued from it. We need to be saved from sin itself in three ways.

First, we need to be saved from the guilt of sin. Paul will begin to expound on the guilty state of man in verse 18. We will launch into it in a few short weeks, Lord willing.

[1:19] Verse 18 of chapter 1, and he will not conclude until the end of chapter 3. He wants his readers to be absolutely assured we are all guilty before a most holy God of sin.

We have all broken his commands. We all are guilty and deserve the just punishment for our sin.

So you'll see in Romans chapter 3 verse 10 and following where he says, as it is written, citing from Psalm 14, none is righteous.

No, not one. No one understands. No one seeks for God. All have turned aside. Together they have become worthless.

No one does good. Not even one. No one. Right? Paul here, citing from the Old Testament, gives us no wiggle room whatsoever. None is righteous.

As if he says, huh? Not even you. No one understands. No one seeks for God. We've all turned aside. Together become worthless. And then another objection. No one does good.

[2:27] Not even one. Compare yourself to someone else that you know. A co-worker. A sibling. Well, I'm not as bad as.

It doesn't matter. You have transgressed God's law. You need your guilt for that taken away for you. Praise be to God that he works powerfully through the gospel message to set us free from the guilt and therefore the penalty of our sin. This is the wonderful doctrine of justification.

You heard me say earlier, we are justified by grace alone, through faith alone, and Christ alone.

Justification is a one-time act of God declaring us forgiven and righteous.

Forgiven and righteous. The gospel, the double cure that saves from sin and makes us pure.

[3:27] Paul writes in Romans 8 and verse 1. There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.

Having believed in him. Having believed in him, putting on his perfect life, his law keeping, him bearing the punishment that is due us. Our guilt is expunged.

It's taken away. It's removed as far as the east is from the west. It is hurled into the sea to sink and be seen no more.

More. We need to be saved from the guilt of sin. And praise God, if you were in Christ this morning, then you have been saved from the guilt of sin.

Secondly, we need to be saved from the power of sin. In order to live in a way that is pleasing to our God, we need to be set free from bondage to our sin.

[4:24] To that sinful flesh baggage that we carry along with us through this life. You see, when Adam sinned, he was able at that moment both to sin and to not sin.

He had the capability of doing both. But when he sinned, his sin nature passed to all mankind. We became enslaved to sin.

And so that even those things that we deem righteous are not righteous. They are sin, self-motivated, self-seeking. But once we've been redeemed, once we've been saved by Christ, we have once again been set free from the power of sin.

It doesn't have dominion over us any longer. Paul writes in Romans 6, verse 17 and 18. But thanks be to God that you who were once slaves of sin have become obedient from the heart to the standard of teaching to which you were committed.

And having been set free from sin, have become slaves of righteousness. That is to say that our hearts are now bent towards keeping the law and not towards breaking the law.

[5:44] Beloved, sin no longer has power over us if we are in Christ. We have the ability by the Spirit to put off those things which entangle and to run.

We do not have to sin. So don't act as if you're a victim of your temptation. Thirdly, we need to be saved from the very nature of sin.

If we have believed the gospel for our salvation, then we have been made new creations. We have changed in kind.

The pollution of sin no longer reigns in us. While it exists, it no longer reigns in us. This is the great doctrine of regeneration.

We have been made new. Paul writes in Romans chapter 8, verse 7 and following. For the mind that is set on the flesh is hostile to God, for it does not submit to God's law.

[6:51] Indeed, it cannot. Those who are in the flesh cannot please God. So a positional place, a kind, those in the flesh.

Verse 9. You, however, are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit. If in fact the Spirit of God dwells in you. Anyone who does not have the Spirit of Christ does not belong to him.

But if Christ is in you, although the body is dead because of sin, the Spirit is life because of righteousness. So we need to be thinking in this way when we think of salvation.

What is it that we are being saved from? The guilt of sin, the power of sin, and the nature of sin. We need also to be saved from a severed relationship with our Creator.

We were made to be worshipers and we will always be some measure of miserable until we can praise our Creator as we ought to. There is no greater, higher good for the creation than to do the very thing that it was created for.

[8:06] We need to be saved from a severed relationship with our Creator in at least two ways. First, we need to be reconciled to God.

Praise God that when we are saved, we are delivered from the penalty of our sin. But it is a more glorious thing that we are delivered to God Himself.

The fellowship that existed at the Garden before the fall is restored when we are saved. Our relationship is made whole. Those who were once cut off are now grafted in.

Those who were enemies are now called friends. Those without a home are adopted as sons. The great doctrine of adoption.

And ladies, you want to be sons because sons got the inheritance. Romans chapter 8, verse 15 and following. You do not receive the spirit of slavery to fall back into fear, but you have received the spirit of adoption as sons by whom we cry, Abba, Father.

[9:12] The spirit himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God. And if children, then heirs. Heirs of God and fellow heirs of Christ.

We need to be saved from our lack of belonging. And we need to belong to our God. We also need the hope of glory to be restored.

Lord, everlasting relationship with this God awaits us. An eternal dwelling. Whether it's the present place or the future new heaven or the future new earth.

Those who are in Christ will be with God forever. Once again, Romans 8. Can you tell I'm eager to get there? Verse 38 and following.

Paul says, I am sure that neither death nor life nor angels nor rulers nor things present nor things to come nor powers nor height nor depth nor anything else in all creation will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus, our Lord.

[10:21] We will be with him forever. So, we need to be saved. And I hope that this morning you are saved.

You're getting some broadening sense of what that means. A full scope. That you've been saved by believing in this gospel. The good news that Jesus came, lived, died, and was raised.

I pray that by grace alone, through faith alone, in the saving personal work of Christ alone, you have been saved. If not, then I pray that this be the hour of your salvation.

That you flee from the wrath to come by fleeing to Christ. That you see that you need to be saved and the only way that you might be saved is through the powerful gospel.

Paul goes on in verse 16 to say the gospel is the power of God, excuse me, the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes.

[11:28] Believe that it's true. Believe that its promises are true for you. John Trappa, Puritan pastor. This is the quotation on your bulletin.

I finally get to read it. It's been on your bulletin for like a month. It said, It is the nature of faith to believe God upon his bare word. It will not be, saith sense.

It cannot be, saith reason. It both can and will be, saith faith. For I have a promise. Now, this would be an inadequate consideration of this phrase.

For it is the power of God for salvation. If we do not consider the word power. This Greek word *dunamai* is the root word that we get our English word.

But you can guess dynamite from powerful. John MacArthur in his commentary on this text said, The gospel carries with it the omnipotence of God.

[12:32] That's the all-powerful God. The omnipotence of God. Whose power alone is sufficient to save men from sin and give them eternal life.

Too often the gospel gets peddled as if we are sick. And the gospel is some medicine that we need to be made well. This is not the picture that Paul paints or the rest of the scripture paints.

It's rather that we are dead and we need God's power to make us alive. The gospel is powerful. It is the means by which we are saved.

And it is a means wielded by God himself. It's not to be a great comfort to anybody who is seeking salvation. And to those who are saved.

We are unable to save ourselves. We must have the all-powerful God work on our behalf to make us new.

[13:34] Again from Romans. Romans 5 and verse 6. Paul says, For while we were still weak at the right time, Christ died for the ungodly. Romans 8.

For God has done what the law weakened by the flesh could not do. God has done what we could not do. By sending his own son in the likeness of sinful flesh and for sin.

He condemned sin in the flesh. And Romans 9 verse 15 and 16. For God says to Moses, I will have mercy on whom I have mercy.

And I will have compassion on whom I have compassion. So then it depends not on human will or exertion. But on God who has mercy.

God has purposed the salvation of his people. And he will accomplish all his purpose. Our God is all-powerful.

[14:31] And he does not put into the hands of men his power. He accomplishes what he sets out to accomplish. We are going to unpack this at length in the coming months.

It is deep water to wade in. And we are going to just plow right into the middle of it. But I just want to interject a warning here. The doctrine of election should never make us proud.

And it should not cause us to question the justice of our God. The doctrine of election should altogether humble us as we are a people undeserving of the loving kindness of our God.

Were our God to be entirely fair to us, we would be destroyed in this instant. But because he loves us.

And because he's just. He has made a way that we might be saved. These thoughts should create in us awe at the eternal purposes of the Most High God.

[15:39] It's exactly what it does for Paul. Turn with me to Romans chapter 11. After he goes through this great expounding of this doctrine.

Beginning halfway through chapter 8. And then in through the end of chapter 11. Before he gets to the practical application part of the letter. He says this. Oh, the depths of the riches and wisdom and

knowledge of God.

Do you hear anything judgmental in there? Where Paul says, I think I know better than our God. Absolutely not. He says, this is a depth to be plumbed.

Oh, the depth of the riches and wisdom and knowledge of God. How unsearchable are his judgments and how inscrutable his ways. For who has known the mind of the Lord?

Or who has been his counselor? Or who has given a gift to him that he might be repaid? For from him and through him and to him are all things to him.

[16:41] Be glory forever. Amen. His theology erupts into doxology. Into praise. And it ought to do the same for us.

We ought to be laboring to understand his word. That we might praise God as he intends to be praised. We ought not make a God of our own design.

But rather we should worship the God of the text. Now, God in his eternal purpose has chosen to use the church as a secondary means for the salvation of his people.

And this is an important thing to distinguish. He's not given to us the power. The gospel is his power. Right? It's the power of God. But he uses us.

His people preaching his message in order to save his people. And he does it because he loves us. It's how we experience him. This side of glory.

[17:46] Right? We can't yet see him face to face. But we get to see him at work in the world around us. As we're sent as ambassadors of our great king. Romans chapter 10 verse 13 and following.

Paul writes for everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved. This is from Joel 2 verse 32. Then he said, well, how then will they call on him in whom they have not believed?

And how are they to believe in him of whom they have never heard? And how are they to hear without someone preaching? And how are they to preach unless they are sent? As it is written, Isaiah 52 and verse 7.

How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the good news. Paul follows out his reasoning. I mentioned to you before he loves fours in this book.

Joel 2 32 says for everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved. Right? We've got this powerful gospel message. People must hear it to believe it. But how are they to believe it if they haven't heard it?

[18:48] And how are they to hear it unless somebody tells it to them? And how are they going to tell it to them unless they're sent? God uses his people to bring about the salvation of his people as we go about preaching the good news.

I stated in my introductory comments, if we misunderstand these verses, then we will find ourselves misunderstanding the gospel itself. If we don't get these verses right, our evangelism will go awry and we will lose our ability to be effective witnesses to our great salvation.

We will either get the message itself wrong or we will get the methodology of preaching that message wrong. Likely both. I hope this morning that the gospel message has been made clear.

If you have many misunderstandings of the gospel, please ask questions. We are here for that. We want you to be exceedingly clear what the gospel is.

With the hope that we are clear on what the gospel is, I want to spend our final moments together in this text speaking to the possibility of getting the methodology of preaching the gospel message wrong.

[20:00] You see, I believe that a great error of the church in our day is to trust in methodology rather than the message. From a sincere desire to see people saved, many have wandered off the message as the power of God and believe that he empowers the next innovation.

This form of error is often called pragmatism. Pragmatism in these terms is a way of thinking that always justifies any means provided that we see the ends that we might hope for.

But the problem of it is, if we are unable to see the salvation of souls and we are innovative to that end, how can we possibly know if people are being saved? You can't witness the regeneration of a heart that may you might hope.

A hand raised, a decision made, an aisle walked doesn't ensure that somebody is in Christ. So how do you know if your means are justifying or that end is justifying your means?

Surely the ends can't always justify the means when the ends are a spiritual goal. Just consider that some of the largest, with my quotation fingers, churches in America don't preach the gospel at all. [21:24] Barely, if ever, do they employ the Bible, yet they grow. Surely those ends can't be good and proper ends.

So we must be so careful that we don't ever think that anything has the power of God for salvation except for the gospel. Except the gospel message.

This is why verse 16 begins, for I am not ashamed of the gospel. Why is Paul not ashamed of the gospel?

Because it is the power of God for salvation. Why should he be ashamed of the gospel? But when Paul tells us that he's not ashamed of the gospel, he states it in this negative form.

Rather than saying, I am very proud of the gospel, for it's the power of God for salvation. He says, I am not ashamed. And I think he does this because we tend towards being ashamed, not toward being proud of the gospel.

[22:33] We want to get our results and we want to get them quick. Pastors everywhere want to be counted amongst those great pastors. Pastors, people want to feel significant in the kingdom.

It's very possible. I think most likely that it was his tendency and that he knew it would be ours to, rather than being proud of the gospel, to be ashamed of the gospel.

Pragmatism is a form of shame in the gospel. It's an expression of disbelief that the gospel is the power of God for salvation. May we be a people who always believe in the gospel preached as the hope for mankind.

May we preach it boldly on Sundays and in our homes and places of employment. May we preach it boldly to ourselves that we might be humble and grateful.

May we be a people for whom the gospel is the theme of our lives. For our good, for the good of others, to the glory of our great God.

[23:47] May we be wholeheartedly devoted to the gospel for it is the power of God for salvation. Let's pray together.