

## The Gospel Of Christ.

Text: Rom 1:16

1) I am not ashamed

Suggested Hymns:

2) It is the power of God to salvation

733, 87, 340, 283, 352

The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, be with you all. Amen.

The text for our sermon today is Romans 1:16, ***16 For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes, for the Jew first and also for the Greek.*** (NKJV)

Lord God, heavenly Father, sanctify us through Your truth. Your Word is truth. Amen.

Dear friends in Christ,

As often as you come to this place of worship, you come to hear God speak to you. His divine Word is proclaimed to you, and where His Word is proclaimed there God speaks Himself.

Today is Palm Sunday and you may have had your Confirmation Service on Palm Sunday. Let us consider a few thoughts.

Regardless of when your Confirmation Day was you came not only to hear God speak to you, but also to speak before God yourselves. And what is it that you said to God? You gave Him a solemn promise, a promise which the entire congregation heard and by which you bounded yourselves to God for all the days of your lives.

You promised Him faithfulness unto death. You promised Him that you will always serve and obey Him, never forsake Him, never desert Him, that neither poverty nor riches, neither honour nor reproach, neither life nor death, that absolutely nothing in this world will ever sever your connection with God and the true Church. Have you keep this promise?

It is a sad experience that with a great number of children the confirmation vow has been set at nought. Thousands of children stood before the altar on Confirmation Day and with the best resolves in their hearts promised to be faithful unto death. But what became of them later on?

For a while they appeared to be walking the narrow way that leads to eternal life, but gradually they drifted away from the church and from God and swelled the large number of the lost. They did not stand firm in the hour of temptation. They began to love the world and its evil lusts. They felt loath to bear the cross of Christ and the reproach which the world heaps upon those who pray, go to church, and make an open profession of the Christian faith.

And so they felt ashamed of Christ whose name they solemnly confessed before men on the day of their confirmation; ashamed of their faith, of their God, and of their church; ashamed of prayer, ashamed of being seen going to church, ashamed of confessing their Saviour before the world, and ashamed of being true Christians.

With a seared conscience they deserted the Christian ranks and joined the host of Christ's enemies, walking the broad way that leads to eternal perdition.

May the Lord grant that not a single one of us shall ever do such a thing! May the Lord grant that on the last day every one of us shall be found standing at the right hand of Christ and hear His words, "*Come, you blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world!*"<sup>1</sup>

Now to enable us to stand firm in all the temptations of life, let us call our attention to a precious Word of God. This Word of God we must always bear in mind and never forget as long as we live.

And if we do this, we will certainly keep the great promise made on our Confirmation Day. We find the same recorded our text today, Romans 1:16, <sup>16</sup> *For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes.* May the Lord bless our meditation.

### **1. I Am Not Ashamed Of The Gospel Of Christ**

Who said this? *I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ.* The greatest and most learned man among the apostles, St. Paul. He did not always say, "*I am not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ.*" There was a time when he hated and detested nothing more than the Gospel of Christ. That was before his conversion, when his name was Saul.

When Stephen, the first Christian martyr, was stoned to death, Saul held the coats of those who did the killing and took great pleasure in the martyr's death.<sup>2</sup> And then he searched the houses in Jerusalem and committed to prison all the Christians whom he could find.

Not satisfied with that, he proceeded to Damascus to persecute the Christians there. But on his way to Damascus the most unexpected thing in the world came to pass. Saul, the persecutor of the Church of God, was converted to Christ in a most wonderful way.

There was a light from heaven blinding him, and a voice, which called to him, "*Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting Me?*"<sup>3</sup> — *I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting.*

He was then led to Damascus and remained blind for three days. But he no more thought of persecuting the Christians. When his sight had been restored by a Christian named Ananias, he was baptised and immediately began to preach in the synagogues that Jesus is the Son of God.

And from this time forth he was not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ. He travelled from place to place, and visited nearly all the principal cities of the Old World, and wherever he appeared he proclaimed the Gospel, - that Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners.

He was beaten, scourged, cast into prison, and stoned for preaching the Gospel. He was mocked, scoffed, laughed at by the would-be wise men of this world, because he believed such a silly thing, as was to their minds, the Gospel of Christ.

But he never faltered, never wavered, and never changed his opinion. Boldly he confessed the faith before Jews and Gentiles, before the rich and the poor, before the learned and unlearned, even before the princes and kings. He was a man who was not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ.

Will we ever be ashamed of this Gospel? Let us fasten upon our souls in indelible characters, never to be forgotten, always to be remembered, these blessed words: "*I am not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ.*"

In the wide world which is before us and through which we are passing, we meet with all sorts of people, and many of them are wicked people, godless

people, people who do all that they can to make us ashamed of the Gospel of Christ.

They laugh at us and sneer at us because we pray, go to church, and lead a Christian life. They tell us that we are the greatest fools to believe what the Bible says, that in this age of progress no intelligent person could hold on to what is called the 'faith of our fathers.' Such unbelievers insist that there is neither a heaven nor a hell, and that it was doubtful at least if there is a God.

And not only by unbelievers and open blasphemers we are approached; there are others who do all in their power to make us ashamed of the Gospel.

False prophets also, people who claim to be Christians and pervert the true Christian doctrine, endeavour to lead us astray. They come to us in sheep's clothing, that is, in Christian disguise, and pretend to mean well for us. They talk Scripture and act as though they only want to have us to know the truth, and be God's dear children, and be sure of heaven.

But inwardly they are ravenous wolves. Their real object, though themselves they might not be aware of it, is to make us ashamed of the Gospel of Christ. They tell us that we must rely on the feelings of our own sinful heart for our conversion and salvation, or that we must gain heaven by our own earnest endeavours.

And what is that but setting aside the Gospel of Christ? Do not be deceived. We have been instructed in the pure doctrine of the divine Word, in God's Word and Luther's pure doctrine.

Let no person take from you that which has been entrusted to you, whether he be an unbeliever or a false prophet. Remember Paul's words to the Galatians, *"If anyone preaches any other gospel to you than what you have received, let him be accursed."*<sup>4</sup>

But it will not suffice to confess the Gospel with the lips only. For in this case you would be numbered with those of whom Jesus says in Luke 6:46, *Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' shall enter the kingdom of heaven.* By your lives you must show that you are not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ.

We are warned 'Beware of sin!' Strive to keep the commandments of the Lord. Never do such things or say such things as you would feel ashamed to say

or do in the presence or with the knowledge of your father and mother. Always remember that God knows and sees everything you say or do.

Do not neglect your daily prayers. The person who does not pray is spiritually dead and is ashamed of the Gospel of Christ. Attend Divine services regularly. The person who does not go to church and has no desire to hear the preaching of God's Word is not of God and plainly shows that he is ashamed of the Gospel of Christ.

Come frequently to the Lord's Supper. The person who does not listen to Christ's command, "*do this in remembrance of Me,*"<sup>5</sup> is no less ashamed of the Gospel of Christ than the person who despises preaching and God's Word.

## **2. For It Is The Power Of God To Salvation For Everyone Who Believes**

So why should you not be ashamed of the Gospel of Christ? The apostle says, "*for it is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes.*"

Must you not say from your own experience that the Gospel of Christ *is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes?* Did not the Holy Spirit of God often move your hearts by this precious Gospel? Have you not been led to say with St. Paul, in 1 Timothy 1:15, <sup>15</sup> *This is a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners?*

When the inestimable love of God to us poor lost and condemned sinners in His beloved Son Jesus Christ was pictured to you, when you were shown how kind God is to us and how He longs and yearns to have all people to be saved, were you not sometimes made to feel as though you must leave this world and hasten to God and to your blessed Saviour Jesus and be with Him forever?

O dear Christians, abide with Jesus, stay with Jesus and with His precious Gospel. The Gospel of Jesus Christ is the only thing which will make you happy, truly happy both in this life and in the world which is to come.

The Gospel is the glad tidings of the grace of God in Christ Jesus, and as long as you sincerely believe in the Saviour Jesus, you will find that the Gospel is truly the power of God to your salvation.

The Gospel will assure you that it was for your sins also that Jesus died on the cross, that, though you be and remain sinners as long as you live, your

transgressions have all been blotted out, that God is pleased with you for His dear Son's sake, and that nothing can happen to you against the will of your good God and Lord.

And when death comes and you must leave this world, the Gospel will enable you to face the last grim foe without fear and trembling. You will commend your soul into God's hands and depart in peace, falling asleep in Jesus.

Let this be your highest aim, then, and the main object for which you strive upon this earth, to obtain eternal salvation. What good, will all the pleasures of life, all the honour among men, and all the riches of this world do you, if in the end you would have to share the rich man's fate in hell and torments? We read in Matthew 16:26, <sup>26</sup> *For what profit is it to a man if he gains the whole world, and loses his own soul?*

Therefore, <sup>12</sup> *Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life, to which you were also called and have confessed the good confession in the presence of many witnesses.*<sup>6</sup>

Never be *ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes*. Be faithful, be faithful unto death, and you shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord has promised to those who love Him. Amen.

The peace of God, which passes all understanding, will keep our hearts and minds, in Christ Jesus. Amen.

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<sup>1</sup> Matthew 25:34

<sup>2</sup> Acts 22:20

<sup>3</sup> Acts 9:4

<sup>4</sup> Galatians 1:9

<sup>5</sup> Luke 22:19

<sup>6</sup> 1 Timothy 6:12