

God's Great News for Humanity's Great Problem *Paul's Letter to the Romans*

I Am Not Ashamed of the Gospel *Romans 1:8 – 17*

Exegetical Outline

- ⁸ First, I thank my God through Jesus Christ for you all,
because your faith is being proclaimed throughout the whole world.
- ⁹ For God, whom I serve in my spirit in the preaching of the gospel of His Son, is my witness
as to how unceasingly I make mention of you,
¹⁰ always in my prayers making request,
if perhaps now at last by the will of God I may succeed in coming to you.
- ¹¹ For I long to see you so
that I may impart some spiritual gift to you,
that you may be established; ¹² that is,
that I may be encouraged together with you while among you,
each of us by the other's faith, both yours and mine.
- ¹³ I do not want you to be unaware, brethren,
that often I have planned to come to you and have been prevented so far
so that I may obtain some fruit among you also, even as among the rest of the Gentiles.
- ¹⁴ I am under obligation
both to Greeks and to barbarians,
both to the wise and to the foolish.
- ¹⁵ So, for my part, I am eager to preach the gospel to you also who are in Rome.
- ¹⁶ For 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.
- ¹⁷ For in it the righteousness of God is revealed
from faith to faith;
as it is written, 'But the righteous man shall live by faith.'

Introduction: The Power of God

This morning, we are going to learn in a little more detail about how God unleashes His power to transform human lives. To illustrate that, I want to tell you the story of one of my heroes, a man named Raul Ries. Raul was born in the late 1940's to a Spanish-American mother and a German-Mexican father. He grew up the hard way in the streets of Mexico City, hanging out with his deadbeat dad in bars, watching fights break out. His father often came back drunk and beat Raul and his mother. So at age 10, Raul tried to fight back, only to get pummeled by his father's fists and words. From that point on, Raul's one goal in life was to be powerful, and kill his father. The family moved to Los Angeles where Raul learned to take out his aggressions on his classmates. He was convicted of assault and the courts gave him a choice between serving time in jail or serving in the military. He chose the military, thinking Vietnam would be a natural outlet for his anger. When he returned with two Purple Hearts, he started a martial arts studio, got his girlfriend Sharon pregnant, married her, and started abusing his family just like his own father did. One day, he returned home early to find the suitcases of his wife and two little sons packed. He was so infuriated that he paced the living room with a 22 rifle, having decided to kill Sharon and the children, and then himself. He was utterly tired of his life. While he waited, Raul turned on the TV. He saw a program with young, long-haired hippies talking about how they gave their life to Jesus. Raul was intrigued, haunted by this need inside him that cried out for God. 'Why did they look so radiantly happy?' After an intense inner struggle, the Vietnam veteran, martial arts black belt fighter, who thought he knew everything about power, surrendered. He said, 'Lord, please, change me, because I cannot change myself.' Jesus came to live in him, to pour out his life and love out through him, and God's power started to transform him from within.

Now, what happened to Raul? Sharon didn't believe Raul for a full year, yet God empowered Raul to be patient and faithful. He became more kind and less angry every day. He bought a huge family Bible that he studied constantly. Sharon later said that it was a miracle that Raul was changing! Over many years, Raul got involved with helping street kids and youth and was instrumental in God changing hundreds of lives. He became a very gifted Bible teacher, and I was one of the people who benefited from his teaching; he helped me get interested in street kids and being involved with them. In fact, even his father, whom he had hated with a passion, accepted Christ when Raul taught. God's power is His power to transform a human life and liberate it from sin and evil. This is the announcement: God has done it once with Jesus, and He is continuing to do it!!! Isn't that crazy??? If that is really true, isn't that awesome?!?!

Context:

We are in the second part of Paul's long introduction to his letter to the Romans. Last week we studied the greeting, verses 1 – 7, and we found that God has GREAT NEWS, all about a new King: Jesus Christ, not a son of a god, as with Caesar, but THE Son of THE God. This news is called 'the gospel.' Now again, what is 'the gospel'? In verses 1 – 17, the word 'gospel,' which is the Greek word 'euangelion' –the word we translated GREAT NEWS – occurs 5 times. 'Gospel' is not originally a Christian word. In fact, it was a Roman word, the word of proclamation that a new Roman Emperor had ascended to the throne of the Roman Empire, continuing the pax Romana. When that word was co-opted by Jesus and his followers, it meant that Jesus had ascended to the throne of the world set up by God Himself, beginning the peaceful reign of God, renewing humanity and the world. It also meant that Jesus is the One who heals humanity by struggling against the flesh of humanity with the power of the Spirit of God within in his own body. There is now a fully healed and fully good human being: Jesus. This week we're going to learn about what happens when this proclamation goes forward. Raul Ries' story is just one of many stories of people who pledge allegiance to Jesus and become subjects of his new kingdom. My story is another. And many in this room have recent stories of that.

Relevance:

Why is this relevant for us? Well, because we have to look deeper into why it's the case that a simple set of words, a basic concept, has so much power? The announcement that a new King has come – this is what unleashes transforming and healing power? It unleashes heaven on earth? Why? This is relevant for us because we need proof and we need confidence. Some of us who are not Christians or haven't experienced this might need proof. Does this in fact happen? And others of us who might already be Christians need confidence that if we place all our eggs in the Jesus basket, that he will in fact give us the power he has.

The Greeting: v.8

Now, I want to spend most of our time in verses 16 and 17 because those verses represent the core of Paul's thought, motivation, and purpose in dictating this entire letter. That theme is the power of God demonstrated in the life of Jesus Christ. So let's move quickly through verses 8 – 15.

In verse 8, Paul breaks into his standard thanks: 'First, I thank my God through Jesus Christ for you all.' One thing caught my attention throughout this section, and that is Paul's great respect for these people. It would have been so easy for Paul to start off by saying, 'I'm an apostle. This is the highest calling in all the world. And you know what I think of you? You're not good enough.' I mean, how many times are we told by other people that we are not good enough? Our parents might say that, and we grow up thinking that guilt motivation is the most effective form of encouragement. But Paul is an apostle, and he doesn't say anything like that at all. I think if he were here with us, he would say, 'I'm really thankful for you, that you've come to know Christ! Because now BC has the potential, at least, to have a living and vibrant witness to Jesus among students, and the ability to send out people transformed by Jesus into the world!!'

The Example of Paul: v.9-15

After his greeting, Paul shares some personal information that gives us more background into him. Basically what we read in verses 9 – 15 is an expansion of verse 1. In verse 1, Paul called himself (1) a bondservant of Christ, (2) a called apostle, and (3) set apart for the gospel of God. In verses 9 – 15, we see how that played out in his life. We can break these verses down into three sections that match those three self-identifications.

<p>¹ Paul, a bond-servant of Christ Jesus</p>	<p>⁹ For God, whom I serve in my spirit in the preaching of the gospel of His Son, is my witness as to how unceasingly I make mention of you, ¹⁰ always in my prayers making request, if perhaps now at last by the will of God I may succeed in coming to you.</p>
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called as an apostle	¹¹ For I long to see you so that I may impart some spiritual gift to you, that you may be established; ¹² that is, that I may be encouraged together with you while among you, each of us by the other's faith, both yours and mine. ¹³ I do not want you to be unaware, brethren, that often I have planned to come to you and have been prevented so far so that I may obtain some fruit among you also, even as among the rest of the Gentiles.
set apart for the gospel of God	¹⁴ I am under obligation both to Greeks and to barbarians, both to the wise and to the foolish. ¹⁵ So, for my part, I am eager to preach the gospel to you also who are in Rome.

In verses 9 – 10, Paul describes how he is (1) an obedient bondservant to Jesus. ‘For God, whom I serve in my spirit in the preaching of the gospel of His Son, is my witness as to how unceasingly I make mention of you.’ Why is he always making mention of them? Because he wants very much to go visit them. He wants this very much, yet he is utterly loyal to the voice of his master, and thus far, Jesus has not allowed him to go to Rome. Look at verse 10, ‘always in my prayers making request, if perhaps now at last by the will of God I may succeed in coming to you.’ He is a true bondservant, putting Jesus Christ first, and himself a very distant second.

Now, we might have the question at this point, ‘Why hadn’t Jesus allowed Paul to go to Rome yet?’ We might think that Jesus, as Missionary Strategist Par Excellence, would want his top man to go directly to Rome. But instead, Jesus waited. Why? We can’t be sure, but possibly because Jesus was looking to win the war of faith over the ages, and he wanted Paul to first dictate this letter and have it put on paper, because Romans defines the power of God in the gospel like no other book.

Then in verses 11 – 13, Paul talks about what it means for him to be (2) an apostle. The apostle’s job is to preach, teach, and establish churches. Again, this is what Paul wants to do in Rome. ‘For I long to see you in order that I may impart some spiritual gift to you, that you may be established, that is, that I may be encouraged together with you while among you, each of us by the other’s faith, both yours and mine. And I do not want you to be unaware, brethren, that often I have planned to come to you (and have been prevented thus far) in order that I might obtain some fruit among you also, even as among the rest of the Gentiles.’

As an apostle, he is able to give a gift to the Romans. He is simply saying that the gift he has for them is not physical like the big bag carried by Santa Claus. It’s spiritual, in the sense that what he has – his firsthand experience meeting the resurrected Jesus – would benefit them on a spiritual, heart level. The purpose of this would be to establish the Roman Christians firmly in the truth.

Now what does it mean for him to be (3) set apart for the gospel of God? Verses 14 – 15 explain this as enthusiasm to tell everyone he meets. ‘I am under obligation both to Greeks and to barbarians, both to the wise and to the foolish. Thus, for my part, I am eager to preach the gospel to you also who are at Rome.’

On a human level, during wartime, warring nations close their embassies in one another’s lands. So the U.S. closed its embassies in Afghanistan and Iraq for a while. They stop diplomatic relations altogether. So God does something that nations today do not do. He maintains ambassadors in countries that are against Him. And these other powers and authorities in this world don’t take kindly to people acknowledging Jesus as their Lord, switching allegiances, and being part of his kingdom. For example, parents who are hostile to Christ don’t want their kids to become Christians. Governments hostile to Christ don’t want their citizens becoming Christians. But every single Christian is an outpost of God’s love, an embassy. If you’re a Christian, you might be mocked, insulted, or looked down upon by others.

But Paul says, ‘I am under obligation.’ Now Asian culture likes to use the language of obligation, whereas White American culture does not. What kind of obligation is this? It’s the language of someone who has been entrusted to pay it forward. In the movie *Pay it Forward*, someone does something nice for you, and then you’re told to do something nice for 3 more people. You don’t pay it back. You pay it forward. That is the kind of obligation Paul is under. You see, so often as Asians, we think that we’re supposed to pay Jesus back for his sacrifice. No: That produces joylessness in a vicious cycle because we can never pay Jesus back. We’re supposed to pay it forward, to others. Or, as Americans, we think everything is just optional. Obedience to Jesus is optional. Carrying out Jesus’ mission is optional. But no: We must pay it forward. To all human beings: Greeks and barbarians, which is another way of saying ‘educated and not educated’; the wise and to the foolish; everyone!!

The Gospel is God’s Power: v.16

So, that's a good way to understand verses 9 – 15. Now we come to what Paul really wants to tell them. Verses 16 and 17 are really the theme verses of Romans. He begins with the declaration: 'For I am not ashamed of the gospel.'

Perhaps many of us feel intimidated living in Boston or coming from New York or other places in the world. I mean, with people living so loosely and freely, with the massive intellectual pride of this area, with the materialism and affluence everywhere, how can the Great News of God possibly have any effect? Look at how he explains the Great News: 'for it [the gospel] is the power of God.' Really, Paul? This news is the power of God? A lot of us feel intimidated by the party culture at BC. We look at all the people who throw the popular parties and wonder why any of them would possibly listen to this stuff about Jesus. Really, Paul? This news is the power of God?

[Paul might have wondered that himself. A few years before, Paul had walked into the port city of Corinth, a bustling Greek city on the Aegean Sea. Like any port city, it was filled with prostitution and other diversions. People reveled in the lust and leisure of Corinth. So when Paul stepped into Corinth, he was wide-eyed. He probably asked, 'Is anyone even going to listen to this stuff?' Yet in the year and a half that he lived in Corinth, Paul learned that the announcement about Jesus is God's power. He saw people let down their walls, and say, 'I feel used and broken.']

Illus: The gospel announcement of a new king is like the impact of the news that the Allies had won the Battle of Normandy on D-Day in World War II. On May 10, 1940, Nazi Germany invaded France in a *blitzkrieg* attack. It was called the Battle of France or the Fall of France. For 4 consecutive years, the French were occupied by the Nazis. They struggled to keep a Resistance alive while more than 200,000 Allied soldiers went through intense training in England. They all had to wait for the perfect convergence of lots of factors: A calm sea so all 5,000+ ships would navigate side by side; good visibility; a low altitude wind to disperse the smoke from the firing artillery and exploding mines on the beaches and clearly expose the targets; a moonless night to preserve the element of surprise; and a low tide so the first soldiers to arrive could see the obstacles placed on the beaches by the enemy. That left a window of opportunity of 3 nights in June. So on June 6, 1944, the Allies landed on the beaches of Normandy, France. There were thousands of casualties and huge sacrifices made. But the Allies beat the Nazis on D-Day. And that news rippled outward. From that point on, everyone knew that the Allies would soon win World War II. The Allies knew it, the Nazis knew it, and perhaps most importantly, the French knew it. When news broke out, cheers erupted throughout France. Because they knew their freedom was coming.

In a similar way, God's GREAT NEWS is that there is that he has won a victory over human evil. He has liberated one human being from all the other powers of the world, including our own evil, self-centeredness, mortality and death. And that news means celebration, at least for some.

Illus: In *The Chronicles of Narnia*, the four children Peter, Susan, Edmund, and Lucy hear about Aslan for the first time. It is GREAT NEWS because Aslan has returned to liberate Narnia from the White Witch. And it's powerful news. When they meet Mr. Beaver, Beaver says, 'They say Aslan is on the move – perhaps has already landed.' And the children have different reactions to that great news: 'None of the children knew who Aslan was any more than you do; but the moment the Beaver had spoken these words everyone felt quite different. Perhaps it has sometimes happened to you in a dream that someone says something which you don't understand but in the dream it feels as if it had some enormous meaning – either a terrifying one which turns the whole dream into a nightmare or else a lovely meaning too lovely to put into words, which makes the dream so beautiful that you remember it all your life and are always wishing you could get into that dream again. It was like that now. At the name of Aslan each of the children felt something jump... inside. Edmund [who had already decided to betray the others] felt a sensation of mysterious horror. Peter felt suddenly brave and adventurous. Susan felt as if some delicious smell or some delightful strain of music had just floated by her. And Lucy got the feeling you have when you wake up in the morning and realize that it is the beginning of the holidays or the beginning of the summer.'

When we hear about Jesus being King of the world, something is revealed in us, if we understand it properly. Either we think that it's good news that God has made a new humanity available to us, a victorious humanity that has all the other-centeredness and goodness and purity and healing that we were meant to have, or we think it's bad news because we would rather do evil and be self-centered, and we now know that God wants us to be as good and as other-centered as Jesus is. So if there's something going on in you right now, it may be a struggle between those two parts of yourselves. Pay close attention to that struggle. If you respond positively, God will release His power in your life.

Paul says that the gospel is ‘the power of God.’ Let’s study this carefully. Literally, the word for ‘power’ is *dunamis* and it means great power, strength, or might. It underlies the English words dynamite or dynamic. Now when Paul said the word *power* everyone’s ears must have perked up. Rome was obsessed with power. They loved the economic power that brought them spices, gold, knowledge, and culture from all around the world. They loved the military power they had that kept law and order in the Mediterranean. They loved the fact that they could have two powerful gladiators fight to the death just to keep them entertained. Rome was a city intoxicated with power. I think people in our age are also searching for power: power in our jobs, power to impress other people, power over other people, so we can feel significant in what we do. Maybe we’re concerned about empowerment for minorities, or empowerment for women. I’ve even been told that there’s a certain kind of personal power – a strength of character perhaps – that would make you sexy! And I think that we all want to be strong so we can just be *somebody*. In many ways, we are all looking for power. The problem is: We have no idea what real power is.

If God showed you His power, would you be impressed? Would you even recognize it? What is the power of God? Is it like Raiders of the Lost Ark when the mysterious ghosts came out of the ark? No, it is far more powerful than that. Now the power of God is specifically concentrated for one purpose: ‘for salvation.’ The word ‘salvation’ itself means ‘deliverance, liberation,’ as if from a cruel tyrant. It comes from the Jewish Exodus experience, where God delivered, liberated, saved Israel from Egypt. God has delivered, liberated, and saved a humanity from sin. Because Jesus struggled from within against the humanity he wore, and cleansed it, healed it by realigning his humanity with the love of God, he killed the self-centeredness in his own humanity and then was resurrected to be a new type of human being, a God-drenched human being. Now Jesus as the king can share the Spirit of his new humanity with us. That’s the news that unleashes incredible healing and transformation.

Only he can liberate humanity from our root problem: the problem of sin. Sin is the root cause of bad character, guilt, despair, loneliness, bad friendships, broken families, racism, poverty, war, and worst of all, self-deception. Sin is the reason human beings choose to reject Jesus and thereby create hell; it’s not that God creates hell and then puts us there. Human beings choose to sin for whatever bizarre, irrational reason, and keep choosing it. We’ll see this problem of sin described in lurid, graphic detail in Romans 1:18 all the way through 3:20. Over the next few weeks, we’ll consider the question, ‘Does humanity really need healing?’ But for now, let’s ask, ‘Is there any evidence that the news of Jesus has this kind of power?’

Illus: How many of you who are Korean know that Christians played a major role in the Korean Independence Movement? Under Japanese occupation, they launched a non-violent resistance movement largely through the Christian network. For example, Ahn Chang-Ho came to Jesus as a teenager and decided that he couldn’t hate the Japanese and retaliate with evil. But he also had to work towards justice and independence. So he ran schools, formed organizations, advocated for Korea internationally and at the League of Nations, and was elected the first President. And he’s just one example. In 1919, only 1% of the total population of Korea was Christian, but 50% of the signers of the Korean Declaration of Independence were Christian. That’s why other Koreans had a good and accurate perception of Jesus: Jesus helped them resist the evil out there, but also the evil in here (in the human heart). So Christianity grew exponentially in South Korea, and some signs show in North Korea as well. It’s affected your families, and you should know this.

Illus: How many of you who are Chinese know that Dr. Sun Yat-Sen, the founder of modern China, was a Christian? He gave his life to Jesus while he was a student in Hawaii, and that was part of the reason why he decided to come back to China, become a doctor, and work to end the corruption of the Qing Dynasty. Though he did help fund military movements, it was against the warlords who were fighting amongst themselves and the government he was establishing. His intention was to establish democratic processes. When he became Premier of China, he sponsored public discussion and debates about Christian faith. Shortly before he died, he wrote in his journal, ‘For 40 years, I have wrestled with the devil, and you should do likewise. I want people to know that I am a Christian.’ In his case as well, Jesus helped him struggle against the evil out there, and the evil in here (in the human heart). I’m not saying that any of these people were ‘perfect.’ They, along with us, were still flawed. But to the extent that Jesus made a real difference in their lives, I think it’s important to point out.

I think Paul must have felt this way about God’s power, too. You see, Paul used to be what we today would call an elitist, racist murderer. He looked down his nose at anyone who wasn’t as intelligent as him, and who wasn’t Jewish. Furthermore, he organized the mob that stoned Stephen to death, as he stood back smugly and tapped his fingers. Paul was not a nice guy! He was a snob filled with hatred! Think about the worst person you know. Think of all the times you’ve wondered, ‘What could possibly change him or her?’ And now imagine God totally transforming that

person. That is what God's power is all about, and that's what Jesus did in Paul. He wrought such a transformation that Paul now writes, 'I am indebted to Greeks and barbarians, to the wise and the foolish...I don't care who you are, I'm indebted to you.' What's even more amazing is that Paul wants to go to Rome. Why is that amazing? Because eight years prior the Emperor Claudius expelled all Christians and Jews from the city, and now his successor, the capricious Nero, sat on the throne. Paul is putting his head into the jaws of the lion, but we hear nothing but courage: 'I am not ashamed of the gospel.' And just think: he's writing these wonderfully nice things to people he's never even met before! That is the power of God! Take serious note when Paul writes about the power of God, because he's writing from first hand experience!

One of the greatest military men of all time, Napoleon Bonaparte, observed this:

'I see in Lycurgus, Numa, and Mohammed only legislators who, having the first rank in the state, sought the best solution of the social problem, but I see nothing there which reveals divinity. On the contrary, there are numerous resemblances between them and myself, foibles and errors which ally them to me and to humanity.

Everything in Christ astonishes me. His spirit overawes me, and His will confounds me. Between Him and others in the world there is no possible term of comparison. He is truly a Being by Himself...The truths which He announced, His manner of convincing, are not explained either by human organization or by the nature of things.

His birth and the history of His life, the profundity of His doctrine, which grapples the mightiest difficulties, and which is, of these difficulties, the most admirable solution, His gospel...His empire, His march across the ages...is for me a prodigy, a mystery insoluble, which plunges me into a reverence which I cannot escape...a mystery which I can neither deny nor explain. Here I see nothing human.

His religion is a revelation from an intelligence which certainly is not that of man. There is a profound originality, which has created a series of words and maxims before unknown. Jesus borrowed nothing from our sciences. One can find nowhere, but in Him alone, such a life as His...

I know men; and I tell you that Jesus is not a man. Superficial minds see a resemblance between Christ and the founders of empires and the gods of other religions. That resemblance does not exist. There is between Christianity and whatever other religions the distance of infinity...I search in vain in history to find the equal of Jesus Christ.'

Wow! That observation speaks of the power of Jesus Christ which he gives to us when we come to him. I have to confess that for a while, I was embarrassed or ashamed of my faith, this news that I had believed. But now that I truly understand Jesus and what he did, I can say, more than any other time in my life, 'I am not ashamed of Jesus.' In fact, I'm incredibly proud of Jesus. Who else is like him?

The Gospel Reveals God's Righteousness: v.17

Especially because Jesus is the way God is fulfilling all His promises to transform humanity. There's one final verse and one final thought. The gospel also reveals God's righteousness. Verse 17: 'For in the gospel the righteousness of God is revealed by faith from first to last.' In the Old Testament, God was said to be righteous when He fulfilled His promises to Israel. God had made a covenant, a permanent and binding relationship with Israel, to make them into the new humanity He always wanted. After all, if you have a good God, and a humanity that is partially evil, the only real resolution to that is that God would transform humanity into His goodness. Jeremiah and Ezekiel – two of Israel's prophets – saw urban violence and oppression of the poor and cried out for God to make Israel new. 'We want a new heart, a new spirit!' they said (Jer.31:31 – 34; Ezk.36:24 – 36). After living for a while in the midst of urban violence, I can say I know a little bit about what they mean! When you see humanity at its ugliest, you definitely want to see God transform humanity for better.

God even makes human beings able to be faithful to him. That's part of why Paul quotes Habbakuk: 'As it is written, 'But the righteous will live by faith.' The full quote from Habbakuk says, 'For the vision is yet for the appointed time; it hastens toward the goal and it will not fail. Though it tarries, wait for it; for it will certainly come, it will not delay. Behold, as for the proud one, his soul is not right within him; but the righteous will live by his faith.' (Habbakuk 2:3 – 4) So righteousness is something that also can describe us when we are faithful to God. The important thing to remember in this case is how God's righteousness is to help us be righteous. It comes 'by faith from first to last.' That is to say, by responding to this news about Jesus with trust and allegiance; that is *faith*. And as a result, God empower us to be more faithful to him.

Illus: I experienced this at home. During the summer before my senior year of college, I went through a very difficult time. That was the time my parents finally decided to get their divorce. There was lots of fighting; my

dad's drinking made things scary, too. Normally, I usually sulked or left the house. My pattern was to leave my problems behind. But during my junior year, I had heard my college pastor teach out of Romans about the power of Jesus to change us as he lived his life out through us. And I felt like Jesus was asking me to stay at home. I said, 'No!' I said, 'Lord, if what you say is true, then you need to keep me home and love my parents through me NOW!!!' And that he did. I spent many long nights talking to my parents, mediating their fights. But I began to see them as individual people for the first time. I talked with my younger sister and felt like I started to understand her for the first time. There was one day when my parents decided to divide all the things they owned. We were too poor to afford a lawyer, so they had me mediate the conversation. I thought to myself, 'What?!? I'm not neutral.' I felt the most betrayed, used, abandoned I've ever felt. But at the same time, strangely, I felt Jesus loving me. And even in that conversation I felt a compassion for my parents. One night I was talking with a friend and telling him about all this. I'll never forget Malcolm's words to me, 'How can you be so other-centered at a time like this?' I treasure those words because they're such a powerful reminder to me that Jesus has the power to heal and transform us.

So in conclusion, the power of God's great news is to save us from sin. We're going to start seeing how bad sin is next week. But Paul wants us to know right off the bat that Jesus Christ saves us from it by putting his own life into us. And I hope that over the coming weeks, we would come to say with Paul, 'I am not ashamed of the gospel.'