

Faith in the gospel of Jesus Christ (Quality: Good)

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Preacher: Roe, Norman (1939 - 2021)

[0 : 00] So Lord may help me at our short attention to the first, to the epistle of Paul to the Romans chapter 1 and verses 16 and 17.

Romans chapter 1 and verses 16 and 17. For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, but it is the power of God unto salvation to everyone that believeth, to the Jew first and also to the Greek.

For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith, as it is written, the just shall live by faith.

In the opening of this epistle that Paul writes of the brethren there in Rome, he expresses the real prayerful concern that he had for them, as believers through grace, and his long-held desire to visit them, though he had been prevented up to the time that he wrote this epistle.

We find towards the close of the epistle he expresses that he would, if the Lord will, visit them on that occasion when he took his journey into Rome.

[1 : 41] Now in just mentioning these things, let us notice how we see he had brought before us not only that, though it was the desire of the apostle, and unquestionably his desire in this respect was good, but we see how in the outworking of that subsequently in the life of the apostle it was very different to what he himself had proposed.

But we see that indeed it was the Lord's will that Paul should not only visit Rome, but that he should bear witness and testimony unto Jesus Christ there, even before the emperor himself.

And it is in the way that the Lord used to bring that about that we see the outworking of his own sovereign purposes, and of which we can well say truly our God moves in a mysterious way his wonders to perform.

How true that was in the life of Paul in the life of Paul it is no less so in their measure in the life still of the Lord's people.

Do not we find oftentimes with matters and issues in our own lives that we may well propose certain things and not necessarily what is proposed is wrong, but the mercy for us is this, that the whole disposing thereof is of the Lord.

[3 : 36] How important for us in every aspect of our lives to seek not only to know, but also to do the will of God and being brought under that divine teaching in true submission to his holy and sovereign will as it pertains unto us.

We find here then with Paul he desired greatly to visit Rome, but how different were the circumstances that he passed through in the eventually being brought to Rome as he was, brought there as a prisoner and with all that appertained unto him throughout that time when he was arrested in Jerusalem and with respect to his being brought before the various governors until as well through that voyage to Rome which is described in the latter part of the Acts of the Apostles beset as it was with such danger indeed and as he was exposed to both in that tremendous storm and the subsequent shipwreck as well and yet we see the outworking and the gracious purposes of our God.

Ah, I say again though man proposes the whole disposing there is of the Lord and one important truth surely is opened up to us even in these events and that is this that it is that that we see in all the Lord's appointments for his people there is this that he always not only has in view but will most surely accomplish and that is his own that which pertains to his own glory and ultimately to the real profit of those whom he hath loved and chosen and called by his grace.

Ah, could not Paul bless God even for all the privations he was subject to could be thankful to his God and Saviour even in those events surrounding both his being brought being arrested and brought to Rome and imprisoned also as he was subsequently on another occasion as he could write to the brethren at Philippi that he would have them to understand that the things which had happened unto him had fallen out rather to the furtherance of the gospel.

No, it is not either in the life of Paul but it concerns ourselves either that the events and circumstances of our life are directed by what men describe as chance and fortune no far from it.

[7 : 01] We sometimes sing that the fictitious powers of chance and fortune I deny my life my minutest circumstance is subject to his eyes what a mercy for us as surely the apostle proved that not only our God is in control but he indeed does rule and reign amongst the armies of heaven and amongst the inhabitants of the earth that in all the events and circumstances both of men and nations with all the upheavals that we see amongst the nations of the earth and those things which men fear are coming upon the earth are where is the rest for that living family of God oh is it not beneath as a psalmist expresses it the shelter of thy wings he says because thou hast be my help therefore under the shadow of thy wings will I rejoice yes there is the refuge there is the rock of our salvation there is that from whence arises all the encouragement and consolation of the living family of God it is not friends in what we can accomplish ourselves it is not in created things but it is in it is in the Lord our God the creator as his word ever reminds us of heaven and earth oh as I mentioned in prayer and those words the Lord spoke to his servant the psalmist oh the importance the preciousness of the truth are sealed to our hearts but the

Holy Spirit not only that the Lord as he says I am God as he says even thy God ah is not everything friends in that thy God ah and as thy God and father who hath reconciled unto himself through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus and see as we they find set forth in these words that I have read by way of the text how there is surely opened up to us the very wonder and reality of this love and grace of our God and Saviour in that which hath appointed and provided the person and work of the Lord Jesus Christ as the gospel makes known and that for whom not those that are deserving of it not those that can attain unto it by something that they something for themselves no but those that are wholly undeserving of it to whom the Lord makes known the blessings of the same through the gracious reality of his sovereign grace of his pardoning mercy for sure is not this of what we have brought not only

I trust to acknowledge but through divine grace to bear witness to for ourselves and that is as Jonah expressed it salvation he says is of the Lord it is the Lord's doing what Paul brings before us here it is the Lord's doing from beginning to end both in the appointing the providing of it and indeed the revealing of the blessings of it in their application of the same for the gracious ministry of the Holy Spirit all redound and must redound to the honour and glory of his great and holy name just one further thought I deal more particularly with these verses that I have read by way of a text as Paul introduces this epistle here to the brethren at Rome he speaks of himself as an apostle of Jesus

Christ indeed called to be an apostle separated under the gospel of God which he had promised afforded by his prophets in the holy scriptures concerning his son Jesus Christ our Lord which was made of the seed of David according to the flesh and declared to be the son of God with power according to the spirit of holiness by the resurrection from the dead let us not never lose sight of what was ever the witness and testimony of the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ as they did preach the glorious gospel of his grace look at it as brought before us one of the prominent themes that the whole of the act recorded the acts of the apostles and it was this that Jesus

Christ is Lord that was one of the central themes of the ministry of the apostles as they went forward from the day of Pentecost bearing witness and testimony to Jesus Christ that he is Lord of all as he declares that through him all that believe in his name are delivered from all things from which they could not be justified by the law of Moses but that Jesus Christ is Lord that is that he is the ever living one that to him all authority and power is given both in heaven and in earth as he said to John there as we find recorded in the opening chapter of the book of the revelation he appeared there to

[13 : 47] John and oh what a glorious manifestation of himself is witnessed there and that John subsequently indeed does recall as he was instructed to do so ah we see the effect that it had upon John he says I fell at his feet as dead overwhelmed with the wonder and the glory of that which was there made known to him he says he laid his right hand upon me saying unto me fear not I am he that liveth and was dead behold him alive again forever more and have the keys of hell and of death friends this is the very uniqueness of the true Christian faith and that is that he that is our

Lord and saviour is not only he that hath died for us but that he has risen again and is the ever living one the point I just drew your attention to those verses the opening of this epistle is for this that when it is declared written there to be declared to be the son of God with power according to the spirit of holiness by the resurrection from the dead oh does that not witness his resurrection from the dead his eternal power and Godhead because friends it was it was by his own power he rose from the dead as he said before his crucifixion he says he says no he laid down his life of himself no man taketh it from me have power to lay it down have power to take it again this commandment have I received of my father ah you know friends we see in the miracles both that the

Lord Jesus Christ himself performed and also subsequently the early days of the new testament churches through the ministry of the apostles there were instances where one and another was raised from the dead ah but our Lord Jesus Christ friends that manifested his eternal power and God that he rose himself from the dead indeed having once forever in his offering and sacrifice put away the sins of his people making full atonement for the same fully satisfied all the claims of divine justice and I say the glory of the church of Jesus Christ of the living family of God is this that our God and Saviour he lives and he reigns and that he is the same yesterday today and forever do not overlook this vital point and that is as we read the accounts that are given us in the gospels of Matthew

Mark Luke and John we can say yes we have there a faithful account a true account of the words and the works of our Lord Jesus Christ undoubtedly but friends they not only inform us of what Jesus was when he was here on earth but they speak to us this vital truth not only what he was but what he is yes the same full of grace and truth does not the apostle testify of the same when he says the word was made flesh yes that same eternal word that was with the father is manifested he says unto us was made flesh and dwelt among us and we beheld his glory the glory as of the only begotten of the father full of grace and truth well it is of this glorious one our

Lord Jesus Christ of whom not only Paul but all the apostles bore witness and testimony and of what he is set forth of those things concerning himself and what has made known to us in the glorious truth of the gospel he hath both accomplished the blessings that are found and flow from and through the same and that according to the sovereign purposes of our God and to guilty sinners still even as many as the Lord our God shall and does call Paul then expressing not only his true heartfelt desire to visit the brethren there at Rome and as the Lord enabled him to preach the word amongst them he goes on to say

[19 : 44] I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ our friend let us pause a little few moments upon such a statement as this I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ you know we live in a day a generation indeed has it not been of that sadly so down the generations how many are ashamed of the gospel of Jesus Christ even many I fear that profess to preach the gospel of Jesus Christ are in effect ashamed of it because they do not friends proclaim in all the fullness and the freeness of that glorious gospel as it is revealed to us in the precious truth of the word as one well says no other gospel we can own but that which sets

Jesus Christ upon his throne that proclaims salvation full and free for such polluted worms as we are and the very testimony that the blessings of that salvation that the gospel makes known is not of man but it is of God it is not man's doing not even man's contribution to it it is all a grace from beginning to end surely if we know anything under the blessed teaching of the Holy Spirit of our own ruin through sin and our own utter condemnation as a sinner before God we should have no notions friends of being able in any way to contribute towards the realisation of those blessings that the gospel makes known no we will be thankful for this and will ever bless

God for the same that oh his salvation and that which the gospel makes known is full as well as it is free that it is that wherein all that a sinner needs for time and eternity is fully provided and that by and through what our Lord Jesus Christ himself both is and has also accomplished in his life sufferings death and glorious resurrection and ascension and ascension now of the right hand of the majesty in the heavens and that made no communicated to the sinner through the gracious ministry of the Holy Spirit in quickening the dead in trespasses and sins and imparting the blessings of pardon peace and eternal life to the praise of the glory of his great and holy name no

I'm not ashamed says the apostle of the I'm not ashamed of the gospel of Christ ah how friends many were offended at the ministry not only the apostles but even that of our Lord Jesus himself and ah it is we may must be well friends expected it is no different today than it was in the days of the apostles when our Lord himself was here upon earth the faithful preaching of the gospel will always cause offence to the natural man ah it is that which is a divisive thing but it is that friend which a natural man not only it will not but he cannot receive look at when the apostles preached in the various places called the acts of the apostles what indeed was a reaction to their ministry to that which they preached many were offended and not only offended but indeed did evidence their enmity against both the apostles and that which they bore witness and testimony to and yet there was this also though many believe not yet there were those that were brought both to hear and receive and believe the testimony that God has given of his beloved son for that very ministry of the apostles as we read in the acts as many as were ordained unto eternal life and believed and not ashamed of the gospel of Christ no and it sure is incumbent upon the servants of Jesus

Christ to teach and preach Jesus Christ whether men will hear or whether they will forbear the important thing as it concerns the servant of Jesus Christ to be found faithful to the word of the truth of the gospel ah you remember when even under the Old Testament dispensation when the Lord raised up his servants of prophets in the case that a point pick out one of Jeremiah when he called him to that word he bid him to preach that to speak that which the Lord would make known to him was when tickly told not to be afraid of their faces look at the opposition the prophets met as they faithfully bore witness to what the word of the Lord had made the word the Lord had made known unto them similar as it was as I have said with the apostles is human nature friends any different today ah we see a solemn things brought before us later in this chapter that I read to you this evening what a depiction there of what fallen men and women are as found friends dead in trespasses and sins the corruption that surely is rooted in the heart of fallen men and women of themselves and it is only in the overruling and restraining hand of

[26 : 53] God that that does not break out in all the fullest manifestation of it even in this fallen world ah in that sense we have ever caused to be thankful and that is the restraining as it were hand of God even upon the whole of his creation not as it is through the fall and the sin of man as the sin of man yes we live in a day in a sense it has been solemnly true when darkness covers the earth and gross spiritual darkness of people but oh see here this glorious gospel of of christ wherein is the true light that shines in this dark world as it were here we see in that which the gospel makes known which addresses and only can and does address the deepest needs of guilty needy sinners and not ashamed of the gospel of christ and i said why was he not ashamed because he knew and known its power in his own soul remember what saul of tarsus was oh what a very religious a strictly religious man he was as a pharisee see what he could speak of boast of in that sense of both what he was and what he did yes he could say that touching the law blameless that is far as if as viewed from the human standpoint oh if there was a man that was religious and upright that sense and zealous for his religion so was saul of tarsus but oh see as the lord met with him there on that damascus road be not brought to know the very truth of what he testifies here the power of god unto salvation to everyone that believeth for him in all the religion that he had as a pharisee there's no salvation there for him nor is there any salvation for sinful fallen men in all religious acts and practices of themselves no salvation salvation only is found here in what the apostle testifies that which the gospel of christ makes known the power of god unto salvation the emphasis here upon the power of god is this that that salvation that salvation that is made known is that which saves sinners to the praise of the glory of the lord's name here is the power of god manifested not in enabling sinners to help themselves but friends in saving sinners in doing all that is required to the praise of the glory of his name as paul could also say as a well-known word when he said it's a faithful saying worthy of all acceptation that christ jesus came into the world to save sinners of whom he says i am chief oh the blessedness of this yes

the very chief of sinners ah is it not friends that surely if we know anything of the teaching of the holy spirit we shall find real affinity with the apostle not only that knowledge the chief of sinners the realization of wonder and blessedness of this almighty power that the gospel is made known forth in the gospel the application of it for that ministry of the holy spirit in bringing a sinner from darkness to light from the power of satan unto god and bringing us friends to receive the very testimony that god has given of his beloved son the power of god unto salvation to everyone he says that believer to the jew first and also to the greek yes even in these days we live when the when it concerns there's a professed to know and love the lord and indeed in a very much in a minority amongst the remnant of the lord's people amongst the churches of jesus christ in our day often times in many instances there be few that meet or love the lord jesus christ in sincerity and in truth and yet let us not forget the work of our god goes on the lord is and still calling out is only let any will friends manifest the work of his grace the hearts and lives of his people not only is he calls them by his grace but the maintaining of that life of faith as well but he that hath begun a good work in you the apostles he wrote to the

Philippians will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ have often said here is the encouragement for the servants of Jesus Christ and also for the church of Jesus Christ in the darkest of days it is this the lord has said my word shall not return to me void but shall accomplish that which I please and prosper in the thing where to I have sent it ah may we know friends increasingly with the rich mercy of our God what it is to have that confidence in our God trust in him in the believing realization that what he has promised he is able also to perform you know Satan is ever active in our day as he has been down the generations of what is that to undermine the confidence of the living family of

God in those things that we have not only heard but received and believed through the rich mercy of our God ah how often is the faith and the hope that sense of the believer assaulted and through the machinations of the evil one not only stirring up the unbelief that is rooted in our fallen nature but from matters that arise and from without ah but oh for that grace that enables us still to look to and to cling alone unto our Lord Jesus Christ resting on holy upon that which is set before us in his word his own unchanging love and faithfulness he said but see what sets before us here what that glorious gospel of

Christ that that that glorious gospel of Christ consists he says for therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith as it is written the just shall live by faith ah this is what the gospel makes known the righteousness of God what do we understand for that righteousness of God for it is this alone wherein friends God justifies the ungodly it is through that righteousness of God that is described here in which is bound up and from whence does flow all the blessings of pardon peace and eternal life to guilty sinners even as we are as many as the

[36 : 52] Lord our God shall call what is this righteousness of God that the apostle speaks of here which is revealed from faith to faith the just shall live by faith notice this thought here at the moment remember what the scripture says of Abraham and as Paul opens that up further in this epistle to the Romans speaking of Abraham he says Abraham believed God and it was counted unto him for righteousness and Abraham was justified before God and that through the righteousness that he had received not the righteousness that he himself had wrought out but Abraham was a sinner as all men are or that

Abraham received of God was of grace from beginning to end but that very faith wherein Abraham believed God was that which he had received of God as faith is the gift of God and the very exercise of that faith the very life of the child of God is of and from the Lord and dependent upon the Lord for the exercise of the same but it is that righteousness which faith receives not what faith has wrought out that is but set before us here described as a righteousness of God let us be clear upon this point God himself indeed is righteous holy and just respect to the person of our Lord Jesus Christ it speaks of the righteousness of God it is the righteousness that our

Lord Jesus Christ himself has wrought out as that righteous person and that not for himself for he needed not for righteousness for he was and ever is holy harmless undefiled and separate from sinners he is the righteous one but it is that righteousness that he wrought out that is the great head of the church the substitute and surety of his people in a word it is this this righteousness of God is the obedience of our Lord Jesus Christ to all that his father had given him to do both in his one offering for sin the just for the unjust and as in his holy life he fully met all the claims and demands of God's holy law and that for all that his father had given him the righteousness of God is in the obedience of our

Lord Jesus Christ that which was wrought out in his holy life and it is that friend which is imputed unto the believer by grace through faith to that righteousness that we receive and a faith as faith receives the same after that gracious ministry of the Holy Spirit wherein the whole hope and the consolation of a child of God is found we sometimes sing oh may we know the blessedness of the same my hope is it so friends with you can we come in there this evening my hope is built on nothing less than Jesus blood and righteousness I dare not trust the sweetest frame but wholly lean on his

DNA there is that which is a sinner friend we can live upon as it says here the just shall live by faith yes lives upon not their own doing but the doing of another even the righteousness of Jesus Christ ah that is that which we can live upon and also friends die upon as well but nothing will avail us we come to a dying hour but that which has been wrought out by our Lord Jesus Christ and in the riches of grace made known and applied unto us for the gracious ministry of the Holy Spirit that therein we are brought truly not only to find that rest for our souls but to rejoice to rejoice in this in all that the

[42 : 18] Lord Jesus is in all that he has done the soul can say under the blessed teaching of the Holy Spirit that this God is my God forever and ever and will be my guide even unto death but I'll leave the remarks there may the Lord add his blessing Amen