

SOUND DOCTRINE FOR SPIRITUAL SUCCESS – Studies in Romans

Not Ashamed (Romans 1:16)

There is an undeniable reason why some Christians sincerely seek opportunities for serving Christ and others don't, revealed in Romans 1:16 –

“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.”

At this point in Paul's life and ministry, there was no doubt in his mind that the message of the gospel carried with it the power of God to transform lives. His experience with such meaningful change for the better in his own life and with those whom he won to Christ, eliminated any sense of shame when confronted by the wisdom of this world. His statement in 1 Corinthians 1:18-25 indicates just how unashamed the apostle was in challenging the philosophies and idolatries of the world in which he lived. This attitude of Christ-centered confidence contributed to his eagerness in pursuing every possible ministry open door in his service for Jesus (1:15).

From his many years of missionary outreach, Paul also discovered that the message of Jesus Christ and His redemptive work was an equal opportunity gospel. It was available to everyone who was willing to believe it and receive it by faith in the one and only Savior of the world; and in what He accomplished for us all, when He died and rose again on our behalf. His personal testimony in Romans 1:16 also reveals the apostle's belief in the unlimited atonement of Christ. Jesus did not die for a select few but for everyone. Here, to mention just a few, are some proof texts in the following order: Romans 5:18, 2 Corinthians 5:15 and Hebrews 2:9 –

“So then as through one transgression there resulted condemnation to all men, even so through one act of righteousness there resulted justification of life to all men.”
“. . . and He died for all, so that they who live might no longer live for themselves, but for Him who died and rose again on their behalf.”
“But we do see Him who was made for a little while lower than the angels, namely Jesus, because of the suffering of death crowned with glory and honor, so that by the grace of God He might taste death for everyone.”

Even though he followed the early church pattern of ministering to the Jewish community first, he never placed a limitation on who his audience might be. His outreach was as broad-based and comprehensive as possible; touching every spectrum of Middle Eastern society: Jews and Gentiles, Greeks and barbarians, the wise as well as the foolish (v14). Paul possessed the utmost confidence (not in himself, but in the power of God), that the proclamation of the gospel would result in the successful fulfillment of the Great Commission ministry to which he was called (2 Corinthians 3:4-6; 4:7). **There is also no limitation to our involvement in a Great Commission ministry.** Our Savior wants every one of His followers to be a witness for Him. In some instances, the possibility for sharing our faith with the lost can be greater when we are engaged in secular employment rather than full-time ministry. The real issue is whether or not we are willing to take full advantage of those opportunities, rather than seeking to avoid them due to some sense of shame or an attitude of fear.