

My Motivation for Ministry-Romans 1-17 – 01 March 2011

I like us this morning, to turn our Bibles to Romans chapter 1 and we would look at verses 8-16 this morning. Romans chapter 1, and let's look at verses 8-16 this morning.

Now, two weeks ago, we began the series on the book of Romans and we realized that Paul the apostle, began this book with an introduction about himself. We first looked at the man himself, Paul and how Paul recognized that he is a slave of the Lord Jesus Christ, in the Greek word is the word 'doulos', he is a bond slave, he has given up all his rights, he has given up all his privileges, because he is a slave of Jesus Christ. Paul, a slave of Jesus Christ.

And then, last week, we look at not only the man, but the message and we saw the message that Paul has to bring to the world, it is the message of the gospel, the good news, the message of how God is reconciling sinful man to Himself and God does it, through His Son Jesus Christ, whom He sent to die on the cross for our sins, who rose up the third day, because He is victorious over sin. And so, we first began by looking at the man and then last week at the message. This morning, let's look at his motivation, the reason why Paul is to serve God, why Paul, a great man would surrender his life, into the gospel ministry, to preach the Bible, to preach the Word, to draw people to Jesus Christ.

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There is a story told of a very rich man and he owns a huge piece of land and had a huge amount of money. There was a day, he organized a party. He gather all friends and neighbors to his house, a huge house that had an Olympic size swimming pool. So, he gathered all his friends and neighbors, around that swimming pool and he said to the guests, "This is my offer to you", By the way the swimming pool was not an ordinary one, because the day before, he ordered crocodiles and alligators to swim in the swimming pool. So, it was full of crocodiles and alligators and he called all his guests to stand around that crocodile-alligator infested swimming pool. He said to them "Ladies and gentlemen, I have an offer to make to you. If anyone is able to swim from this end of the pool to the other end of the pool, I will give him a choice, he can either have 10 acres of land, \$10 million or my daughter to be his wife. This is my offer and anyone who can do it, you could choose one of these three." And almost immediately, there was a splash and they saw an amazing sight, a man that was dressed in a tuxedo, he fell into the water and he began to swim, he swam as hard as

he could, he was dodging all the crocodiles and they were trying to snap at him, he tried his very best. Amazingly, within seconds, he swam from one end to the other and got out of the swimming pool drenched and breathless. Everybody just look on with amazement. Wow, you did it! The man was huffing and puffing when the rich man came to him and said "Sir, you are amazing, I actually meant it as a joke, I didn't expect anyone to get into the water, but, I am a man of my word, you managed to swim from this end to the other hand across the crocodile-alligator infested pool, I am going to offer you the three things I offered, 10 acres of land, \$10 million or my daughter to be your wife. Which one do you want?" The man still huffing and puffing said "I don't want any of those three, I just want to get my hands on the man who pushed me into the pool." (Laughter in the congregation).

Life is like that isn't it? Sometimes, you get pushed into a predicament you didn't want to get into. You get into a situation you didn't want to in the first place and some of us today, serve God not because we want to but because we were forced to, maybe, forced to by peer pressure, may be forced to because your pastor said you got to serve, forced to because it was a reason that was outside of yourself. But today, we are going to look at the apostle Paul and his motivation for ministry. Why did Paul serve God? I suggest to you, it was nothing to do with the external pressure, it was all to do from the inside out.

You see, in Romans 1:9, Paul says

For God is my witness, whom I serve with my spirit.

He says I serve God with my heart, with my inner man, with my spirit.

There was an inner drive in me that made me serve my Lord Jesus Christ. Nothing from the outside.

This morning, let's look at Paul's motivation for ministry, found in Romans 1:8-16, not 17, I'm just going to stop at 16. But look at Romans 1:8-16 and as you hear these words, maybe you look at it from the lens and from the perspective of Paul sharing his heart with you all, why he serves Jesus Christ.

Paul said,

8 First, I thank my God through Jesus Christ for you all, that your faith is spoken of throughout the whole world.9 For God is my witness, whom I serve with my spirit in the gospel of His Son, that without ceasing I make mention of you always in my

prayers;¹⁰ Making request, if by any means now at length I might have a prosperous journey by the will of God to come unto you.

¹¹ For I long to see you, that I may impart unto you some spiritual gift, to the end ye may be established;¹² That is, that I may be comforted together with you by the mutual faith both of you and me.¹³ Now I would not have you ignorant, brethren, that oftentimes I purposed to come unto you, (but was let or hindered hitherto,) that I might have some fruit among you also, even as among other Gentiles.

¹⁴ I am debtor both to the Greeks, and to the Barbarians; both to the wise, and to the unwise.¹⁵ So, as much as in me is, I am ready to preach the gospel to you that are at Rome also.¹⁶ For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek.

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The title of the message today is Paul saying "This is my motivation for ministry."

As I read these verses, I see Paul's heart and God allowed me to understand why he did what he did, why he gave his life to preach the message of the gospel and why he gave his life to serve Jesus Christ.

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What is Paul's motivation for ministry? He says, I serve God today because:

1. I am concerned.

He says, I serve Jesus, I give the gospel because I am concerned.

I realize one thing about ministry, ministry must spring from the heart. If you want to serve Jesus, if you want to serve people, then ministry must spring from the heart, because true ministry is not head to head. True ministry is heart to heart. Ministry flows with relationships, it all begins there. You know, Paul was a brilliant man, we all know it, he's a brilliant man. He is probably the greatest theologian apart from the Lord Jesus Christ ever to walk on the face of this earth. I mean from his pen, flows the deepest of theology. He is a brilliant man, studious, he knows the Word of God, but another aspect of Paul's success is that he recognized that ministry must come from a heart of concern. People don't quite care what you know until they

know that you care. People don't care what you know until they know that you care and Paul in these words, versus 8 - 13, is saying, I am concerned, I care for you.

You see, how he begins the introduction of his motivation. He says guys, it is all about you. In verses 8, 9, 10, you can look at the highlighted words, you, you, your and then again you see in verses 11 to 13, I love to see you that I may impart unto you, to the end that you may be established, that is I may be comforted together with you by the mutual faith of both of you and me and it's all about the Romans. Paul did not say, hey, this is why I serve, it's about me, that I may be honoured, that I may be cherished, that I may be respected, but he says, it is all about you.

Ah, friends, ministry is about others. You serve God only as you are concerned for others because Jesus was concern for others and a servant of Jesus Christ must have the same heart of concern like his Master. Look at what Paul is saying in these verses, he says in verse 8 "I first of all, thank God for you, I thank my God through Jesus Christ for you all." I see these as a very others-centered ministry because Paul could have very easily lamented about himself. Did you know that when Paul was writing the letter to the Romans, he was in a very difficult predicament himself? What was he like, what was his environment like, what was his situation like? Acts chapter 20 records for us the situation when he wrote the epistles to the Romans. In Acts chapter 20, we are told this is what is happening to Paul at the time.

Acts 20:3

And there abode three months. And when the Jews laid wait for him, as he was about to sail into Syria, he purposed to return through Macedonia.

In other words, the Jews were trying to ambush him, to capture him, apprehend him. Paul himself was in a difficult position but he didn't say oh, poor me, poor me. He says, "I thank my God through Jesus Christ for you." It's remarkable because Paul had never been to Rome before. The church at Rome was not started by Paul, he had never been there, but it didn't matter to Paul. It is not about him, it's about them. He says, this is what I do regularly for you, I thank God regularly for you because of your faith in Jesus Christ. But he moves on, and in verse 9, we are told, not only does he thank God for them, he makes mention of them always in his prayer.

Look at these highlighted words, "that without ceasing, I make mention of you always in my prayers." There is that double affirmation, without ceasing and always, he is saying I am praying for you, all the time. Paul, is absorbed not with himself but with them. I am always praying for you. We live in a world that is so much about

ourselves isn't it and the best products today are all about yourself, iPad, iPhone, iMac. I mean, if you put uMac, uPhone, uPad, (Laughter in the congregation) I think, it won't fly, people say, why buy what, you? It's about me, myself and I. But Paul is saying, is not about myself, it's about you, I have been thanking God for you, even though I am in a mess and I have been praying for you all the time.

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How does it feel when someone comes to you and say "I have been praying for you." How does it feel? How does it feel if someone comes to you and say "I have been praying for you every single day." How does it feel? I think it feels great. You can't even begin to explain what he feels like and Paul is saying "I have been praying for you all the time because I really care for you, I really love you." My friends, I find it very amazing that you would pray for someone you love, that's true isn't it, but at the same time, if you pray for someone, you will also find that you will love the person you pray for. Can I say that again, we pray for someone we love but we will realize that we also love the person we pray for and Paul is saying, read between the lines, I am praying for you but really I am trying to communicate to you that I love you. He did not say I love you but I pray for you every single day.

I think, that's why Jesus commanded us in the sermon on the Mount, to love our enemies and to pray for our enemies. I think, it is in the midst of prayer that God's Spirit is poured into our lives and he gives us that unconditional love even for our enemies. Paul, here, says I love you and I'm praying for you. My friends, maybe you have been serving God for some time and ministry becomes dry, becomes a burden, almost looks like a chore. You don't love the SF you have been serving anymore. You don't quite treasure the people in your discipleship group or in your Bible study group and it feels like a chore, maybe because you have ceased praying for them because I see a heart of love springing from a life of prayer. Paul says, I thank God for you, Paul says, I pray for you.

And thirdly, he says in verse 10, making request if by any means, now at length I might have a prosperous, that's the word for successful, I have a successful journey by the will of God to come unto you. I will want to come to you, why? For I long to see you, that I may impart unto you, some spiritual gift, to the end ye may be established.

11 For I long to see you, that I may impart unto you some spiritual gift, to the end ye may be established;

He says, I want to come to you, not so that I can fleece from you, not so that I can be ordered by you, not so that I can be applauded by you, not so that I can be paid by you but I come to you that I may bless you, impart unto you some spiritual gift.

You see, real ministry that springs from a heart of concern, is not about getting but it's about giving because that's what Jesus did isn't it? He came not to get, but He came to give, and that's what Paul is saying, I am concerned for you. He's saying, I'm serving you not because I am forced to but because I want to. I'm serving you not because I have to but because I get to and my friends, I think this is an evidence of the grace of God in Paul's life because nobody would serve others without the grace of Jesus Christ because we are all born to be self-centered by nature. I know that very well in my own life.

Before I came to know Jesus, I had this mentality and philosophy of life. I believe, before I came to know Jesus, that everything in this world existed for me. Ta Ta, astounding statement, but this is really what I felt before I came to know Jesus. I felt that the whole world exists for me, I felt that every single human being today, exists for me. In other words, if I'm not in this world, you will not be here. (Laughter in the congregation) You lose your relevance. I mean, this guy is the center of the universe, that's what I thought and so, I think the cars move this way, the planes fly that way, you sit near this place because I am here and I can see you. Everything revolves around me, myself and I. Now, you may not be as extreme as me but I think all of us are self-centered nonetheless because that's the only thing we knew in the flesh. But when someone is able to be like Paul and say "I am concerned for you, genuinely from my heart", I think it is a clear sign of the evidence that God has worked in his heart. It is a mark of grace a clear evidence of a reborn life, a new life in Jesus Christ.

But my friends, ministry must begin with this words, "I am concerned, I serve not because I'm forced to, not because of peer pressure but because I genuinely want to." But we live in a world, where people today are just too concerned about ourselves isn't it? That's why there are so little real ministry in the eyes of God.

One of my spiritual heroes, is this man called Hudson Taylor, an intriguing man of God. I wanted to know about his life because he was a medical doctor, like myself. He wanted to serve God in missions, he wanted to go to a foreign land and to preach the gospel of Jesus Christ and I've long heard that he is a man of faith that God used greatly in his time and so I was very interested to read about Hudson Taylor's life. If you have time, go find one copy and read it, it will bless and feed your soul. I read of

an occasion in his life. He was traveling from one port to another in China and then on board the ship with him was his friend named Peter. Peter was a man who is seeking the Lord Jesus Christ but he has not been saved yet, he has not placed his trust in Jesus Christ as yet and they were sailing along. When they were nearing the point of destination, Hudson Taylor suddenly heard a splash. No, no, this guy is not trying to swim across crocodile infested waters, but he heard a splash. He turned around and he couldn't see Peter. Fear struck his heart. He looked around and saw Peter struggling in the water, he could not swim, in the waters beneath. Everybody crowded around, "Hey, save him, save him, get him out." But nobody knew how to. Hudson Taylor lifted up his eyes, and from the distance, he saw fishermen, Chinese fishermen, trying to catch fish. They were throwing nets into the water and trying to haul together a harvest of fish. And, he shouted to them "Hey, someone has fallen into the waters, can you save him." The fisherman turned around and says "What?" "Someone has drowned, is drowning, can you save him?" The fisherman replied "No, we are fishing, we have no time for you." Hudson Taylor shouted even louder, "Come and save him, I will give you five dollars." The fishermen lifted up their ears and says "What, how much?" "Five dollars!" "No, that's not enough for us." Hudson Taylor then said "How much do you want?" "\$30, at least \$30" Hudson Taylor try to find every bit of money he has on his body, coins, notes he gathered together "I don't have \$30." "How much do you have?" "I have \$14" They thought for a while and they said "Alright, we will come."

The fishermen rowed their boats towards that ship and they threw the net into the waters where Peter just sank. And with that one throw and with that one stroke of movement, they managed to bring up a limp body. It was Peter. They got him up on board the ship and they tried to resuscitate him. Hudson Taylor, being a doctor himself tried his best. But it was obvious after many minutes of trying that life has ebbed from Peter and it is too late.

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Everyone on board the ship was amazed at how hardened and how callous were the hearts of these fishermen who would not let off their fishing for a moment to save a man who was drowning to death. Hudson Taylor, subsequently wrote these words and I read them to you, he said "Is the body, then, of much more value than the soul? We condemn those heathen fishermen. We say they were guilty of the man's death because they could easily have saved him, and did not do it. But what of the millions whom we leave to perish, and that eternally? What about the plain command, 'Go ye into all the world and preach the Gospel to every creature.'"

Isn't it true that we are not doing what God wants us to do because, maybe like the fishermen we couldn't say with Paul, "I am concerned enough for you."

You see, friends, your ministry for God or God's ministry through your lives, must spring from the heart that says I am concerned because real ministry is heart to heart. It's about relationship, it's about care. Paul says this is my motivation, I'm concerned for you, I care for you and before he launches into his doctrinal, theological depth of discussion for the rest of the book of Romans, he begins by saying "I am a servant of Jesus, this is my message, the gospel and the reason why I serve is because I care for you.

2. I am committed

Now, let me move on, because Paul has a second motivation for ministry. He says, not only am I concerned for you, he says I am committed to the cause, I am committed to the cause. He is saying my ministry, I do not do ministry, I do not serve as and when and I feel like it. It's more than that. I do it because I know I have to. There is a sense, a deep sense of responsibility, an obligation on Paul because he said to us in verse 14

14 I am debtor both to the Greeks, and to the Barbarians; both to the wise, and to the unwise. 15 So, as much as in me is, I am ready to preach the gospel to you that are at Rome also.

Paul is saying, I am committed to the work of the gospel, because, I am a debtor to it. I am first a debtor to God who gave me so much. I think he remembers what he himself has written in Romans 1:5 when he says "By whom we have received grace and apostleship."

Rom 1:5

By whom we have received grace and apostleship, for obedience to the faith among all nations, for his name:

The word apostleship simply means a man sent on a mission. He says, I received grace and favor of God and besides that he says I received a mission from God, from Jesus and I know that I am a man on a mission and he knows that he owes God the sense of responsibility that he is not saved to enjoy life as it were but he is saved for a very clear purpose, for the gospel ministry.

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I am a debtor, to the Greeks because I owe a debt of grace to Jesus. He says in 1Cor 9

1Cor 9:16

For though I preach the gospel, I have nothing to glory of: for necessity is laid upon me; yea, woe is unto me, if I preach not the gospel!

There was this drive within Paul, nobody needs to tell him to do it because he knows he owes a debt to God. Friends, we live in a day and age where the devil has sung a sweet lullaby to the church, "Go and sleep, there is no work for you to do, sleep tight my child." And the vast majority of Christians today, have fallen slumber to the sweet lullaby of the devil, you don't have to serve God. Not Paul, I have a debt, I have a debt to discharge, I have a mission I am to live this life for my Master. Cannot be any clearer for Paul, he was driven from the inside.

I think Paul was also recognizing that his debt was to the world, to the barbarians and to the Greeks, to the wise and to the unwise, he says, I owe all of you a debt because I have the message of life and people need to know Jesus Christ. He felt responsible to give especially the Gentiles the gospel message.

In 1952, a terrible outbreak of disease seized upon the United States of America. Maybe none of you live in that age I hope, not yet. In 1952, a terrible disease broke out in America. In that one year, 58,000 people got stricken with this disease. 21,000 of them were stricken with a severe paralysis of the body and out of that, 3000 died that year. Fear gripped the entire nation. It was said, that people approach it like the plague. They realized this was a terrible disease. It was viewed as the most frightening public health problem in postwar America. It was bad, people were fearful. What happened was that children were coming down with paralysis and children, many of them couldn't breathe. Their muscles were so paralyzed, they couldn't breathe properly and parents had to rush their children to the hospital. This disease, according to the Americans was second only to the atomic bomb in terms of fear factor.

This disease, struck this man, Franklin Roosevelt, President of the United States of America when he was 39 years old. He was stricken with this disease and he was wheelchair bound and he served much of his presidency on a wheelchair because of this disease. This disease gained prominence and even up till today there would have some people who are stricken with this disease. Their limbs get deformed,

subsequently, their muscles atrophy, they get scrawny and thin, they can't walk, it's all twisted and turned and in those days, the children and the young people who could not breathe had to be helped to breathe and so they put them in the devices called the iron lungs.

You see, the virus, the disease, has so paralyzed muscles of respiration that they could not breathe on their own and they needed these devices that create the negative pressure to expand their lungs, so that they could take in air. This disease struck an entire nation and caused great panic. What is this disease by the way? Poliomyelitis, polio and nobody had a cure for polio, nobody. No one knew how to treat this disease, no one had a solution to it. The entire nation poured in their resources, their best people on the job and a man, whose name is Dr. Jonas Salk, spent the next seven years, pouring his entire life into research to find a cure and finally he did.

He found something that he could inject into people and create a kind of immunity against this virus. It worked so well that he was splashed across all the papers. Salk's vaccine works and even till today, you have the Salk vaccine for polio. Jonas Salk appeared at the front page, front cover man on Time magazine in 1954 because he was the only one who could eradicate the world of the problem of polio, a debilitating and sometimes lethal disease.

You know, when he invented or when he discovered polio vaccine, he could easily become the richest man in the world, isn't it? I mean, I am a parent and if I know my son is stricken with polio I would give my entire life to save my son, there is no doubt about it and I can imagine, Jonas Salk say if you want a cure, if you want to help your child, give me your entire fortune and people would willingly give. But you know what, if he had done that patent, if he had chosen to go the patent route or the copyright route, then, the whole world would still be suffering in poliomyelitis and so, when they asked him, why didn't you take that patent, he says "I owe to the whole world to save them from poliomyelitis. I owe it to them, I owe to the world to be delivered from the misery of polio."

I think, it's with that same sense of obligation that Paul himself said "I am debtor, I owed it to the Greeks and the Hebrews, to the wise and to the unwise, I am about the ministry, I am willing to suffer persecution, I am willing to be hauled out of cities, I'm willing to be stoned because I owe the people a debt." If Paul lived in our age and day-today, he would go to your school, he will go to your class and he would not be ashamed of saying "Jesus is your Savior." He would not be ashamed in your office

to tell them that he is about the gospel ministry, why, because he knows he or everyone he comes into contact with a debt, a gospel debt.

But, it is so far away from all realization in our lives isn't it that God placed us where we are because we owe people a gospel debt. Sweet lullaby, has been a theme for the church, sleep tight my baby. We owe it to them, because, Jesus gave us life. My friends, Jesus save you from a life of sin of misery, Jesus save you from meaninglessness and we owe Him a debt. We will face Him one day. There will be a day of reckoning and have we discharged our debt well. Didn't our Savior sacrifice His life so that we may be saved and shouldn't we be thinking daily in our lives; to live a life worthy of Him?

Paul, a man who said "I am debtor, I am obligated, I can't see any other way to live my life, because Jesus gave His for me. I am committed to the cause, I am committed to the gospel of Jesus Christ. "

3. I am confident

But friends, not only must we see that Paul's heart was one of concern and commitment, thirdly, his motivation is that he has confidence. I am confident and that's why I serve Jesus. I have absolute assurance and confidence, this is the ministry for me, this is the way and message of life. He said in verse 16

16 For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek. He says "I am not ashamed."

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Yesterday, I went on the Internet and I discovered something called Chindoku. Any Japanese fanatics here? Ah, yes, Adele, I see you here, I saw you just now, Adele. Adele, what is Chindoku, do you know? Huh, I beat you in this one, I know something about Japan that you don't? Chindoku, anyone knows? No, not sudoku. Chindoku is a very interesting group of things, what is it? It's a practical inventions that bring quite a considerable amount of embarrassment. In other words, it is practical, it actually could be quite useful but when you use it, you could be very embarrassed as a result of it.

What do you mean pastor? Can you give me some examples, yes let me show you some examples of Chindoku alright and the Japanese are excellent at it. This is one.

(Laughter in the congregation). I mean, this is practical, very practical. You don't want to be carrying umbrellas all around, doesn't look too cool right, so you might as well stick it up to your neck and let it be both a neck tie and an umbrella.

Another Chindoku they had and sometimes mothers feel very jealous that the husbands can sleep all night and they had to breast-feed the child and so, they invented something for the men so they can also do the work of the breast-feeding and this is what they came out with. (Laughter in the congregation) looks like one, but it is actually a device that shares the load alright, mummy you go to sleep, daddy you take over.

What about this, have you had this problem before, you try to put eye drops but it doesn't (Laughter in the congregation) quite get to your eyes and so you need this funneling system to filter and to funnel the eye drops right to your eyes. This is practical but would anyone of you want to be caught using this and it is quite embarrassing isn't it, you would be quite a shame to use the device.

Women have all other kinds of Chindokus, this is one, anyway, it is wet, I do not want my shoes to be wet, so let's have a little umbrella there and if you dare to use, you can also use something like this. It's an umbrella with waterproof materials that hangs down from it. (Laughter in the congregation) it's cool isn't it. When there is a storm you can.. hey, hey, you are really cool. But on any other day, you look like a fool (Laughter in the congregation). Chindoku, alright. Something else for you (Laughter in the congregation), self-explanatory. In fact, sometimes I think we need some for Sunday services. (Laughter in the congregation) if you did not sleep well last night, you are sleepy and you need to get on a train, hey, this is a space saving device, you don't have to lean on a pole, you don't have to lean on the rails, you can just get this device. Well, one more, this is another one (Laughter in the congregation). This works very well for people like me, sinus problems, allergic nose, don't have to ask, got tissue or not, no need not just rolled down. (Laughter in the congregation). Hey, very practical, toilet roll, the whole roll up there. However, you wouldn't want to be caught dead using it. Very embarrassing.

Is there one for kids, for babies? Yah, I show you one. (Laughter in the congregation). Mommy has no time to mop the floor, let's get the baby to do it. You must be wondering to yourself, why has no one thought of this dressing, it's excellent. In fact, when they drool they can wipe it up themselves. Hey, these are Chindokus, these are what they call practical inventions that are quite embarrassing isn't it?

We are embarrassed when we want to use things like that, but Paul, he says, I am not embarrassed, I am not ashamed, I will not apologize for the gospel of Christ. This is what I would not be ashamed or embarrassed about. By the way, when Paul says I am not ashamed of the gospel, he's not saying that there is no shame in the gospel, get that. Let me say again, when he says I am not ashamed of the gospel, it doesn't mean that there is no shame in the gospel. I believe there is great shame contained within the gospel.

Didn't the writer of the book of Hebrews say, looking unto Jesus, the Author and Finisher of our faith, who for the joy was set before Him, endured the cross and despised the, what's in the word, despised the shame. My friends, that is great shame that Jesus had to endure upon the cross, great shame. Crucifixion was reserved for the lowest and vilest of criminals, stripped naked, abused, ridiculed, mocked, scourged and there the Son of God was hanging on the cross, there was great shame on the cross but Paul says I am not ashamed about that shame, I am not ashamed of it.

When you share the gospel of Jesus Christ, people may want to shame you, why, because the Bible says, when we preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews, it is a stumbling block, but unto the Greeks, it is foolishness, it is folly. They laugh at you, when you share the gospel today, I guarantee you there will be people who would say, are you crazy, how can you believe in Jesus, how can you believe in a carpenter's son, how can you believe that a man dying for you can save you from your sins, how can you be so religious. They laugh at you, they want to shame you because to them it is folly.

There is shame on the cross, there is shame when you share but Paul says, even though that there is shame, I am not ashamed of the gospel, it will not embarrass me. Why? Because I am confident, I am confident about the gospel because it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believes. I believe in the gospel, I trust it. I am confident about it, it is the power, it is the power of God to save, the power to change lives.

There was a salesman, and a vacuum cleaner salesman that went to a farm and wanted to sell his vacuum cleaner to a lady. He got in and says "Lady, lady I have got the best vacuum cleaner in town and this is a powerful device, he can suck up anything on the ground, in fact it is so strong, it can even suck up the entire floor. He goes on very quickly, introduces the vacuum and says "Let me demonstrate to you, let me demonstrate to you, I am going to pour a whole heap of dust on to your floor.

"He throws garbage, he throws rubbish and he says "If I can't suck up all the dust in two minutes, I would eat up all the dust myself." Finally, the lady has a chance to speak and she said "I think you better prepare to eat up all the dust, because there is no electricity in my house." (Laughter in the congregation).

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You better believe that there is power. I am like a salesman, the vacuum salesman today. Let me tell you, the gospel of Jesus Christ can suck up all your sins. Jesus can pay for all your sins and unlike that vacuum salesman, there is power in the gospel, you do not need anything else. The gospel, the good news that God sent His Son to die on the cross and rose again to pay for all your sins, this gospel, this message can change your life. It is the dunamis, the word there is the word dunamis, power, from which we get the word dynamite, dynamic. Is the amazing power of God unto salvation. The word salvation is deliverance and God is able to deliver you from sin, from its penalty, from the fires of hell, is able to deliver you from the power of sin, that you would be no more slaves to sin but slaves to Jesus and ultimately, it saves you from the presence of sin for evermore where God ushers you into a glorious eternity with Him where there would be no more tears and no more sorrows and no more sins.

How, how can I be saved? The gospel, the dunamis of God, is the gospel of Jesus Christ. Paul is supremely confident in the gospel. Therefore, he is unashamed. It doesn't matter if you laugh, it doesn't matter if you ridicule me. I know it can change your life because it has changed mine. It doesn't matter if you are a Greek or barbarian, it can save you. To everyone, what an exhilarating word, "to everyone".

Some of us, think of ourselves, I can never be saved, I can never come to Jesus because I come from the wrong background, I have a wrong moral upbringing, I have a wrong education, I have the wrong status in society, in fact, I have a wrong sexual orientation, I am wrong, my life is in a mess. My friends, the gospel does not make such exclusions, it is the gospel of God unto salvation to everyone, Jew, Gentile, American, Chinese, it doesn't matter, to everyone, criminal, scholar, to everyone. The only condition, who believes, who believes, who places his trust in Jesus Christ alone.

I am confident of the gospel because it changed my life. 16 years ago, 17 years ago, I opened the Bible that God has given to us and then I found salvation and life. My life has changed ever since then. I did not need emotionalism to change me, I did not need someone else to convince me. The Word of God, the Bible, the gospel of God

changed my life and I believe he has changed your life and it will continue to change your life. But friends, there may be some here who has yet to taste that the Lord is good. I invite you, I invite you to look at Scriptures to look at the Bible and to believe that God can save you. It is the gospel that saves.

Paul says today, I am confident. I hope he reinvigorates you as you go out to serve God in your office, in your school, in your workplace, in your neighborhood. Why? Because you do have a powerful message that can change lives. Jonas Salk can change the physical body but the gospel can change the entirety of man. If only, we like Paul would say, I am concerned, I am committed and I am confident. May these be motivation for your ministries. Let's bow for a word of prayer.

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Father, we thank You once again for Your living Word, we thank You that we today serve You and like You, we do pray for a heart of concern for those around us. We pray that You will wake us from that slumber, that we may realize a deep sense of responsibility and obligation to the people around our lives, and Lord, give us faith to realize once again the power of the gospel of Christ. As You have said in Your Word, we pray today, You will send forth Your laborers. Send us out Lord, in office, in our homes, in our schools, in our Jerusalems. Today, I pray as well for friends who are here. It may be the very first time they hear Jesus and how He came to save. It may be some, who have been searching for life, for salvation for Christ, Lord, I trust You today that Your gospel preach is the dunamis to bring about salvation. Spirit of the living God, called them unto yourself that they may be saved onto Your glory. We thank You, we pray this in Jesus name. Amen. God bless.