

- **\*READ Romans 1:13-16\*** Within these verses, we are quickly impressed with the idea that Paul was very excited to preach and share the Gospel with the brethren who were living in Rome. *"I am eager to preach the Gospel to you also who are in Rome....I am not ashamed of the Gospel"* are some of Paul's opening words to these disciples. The Gospel was certainly foremost on Paul's mind, but what made Paul so eager to share the Gospel with these people? It must be for the fact that Paul believed, rightly, that the Gospel is a great and most beneficial message to share with others.
- The word "Gospel" itself simply means good news, and if we spend but a little while considering what the Bible, especially this Letter to the Romans, says about the Gospel then we see exactly why this is the word used to describe this message. Paul, within this specific text, states that the Gospel is good because it is *"the power of God for salvation."* Reading on in the following verse we read that within the Gospel, *"the righteousness of God is revealed."* Within this message we find our salvation and the righteousness of God. This Gospel sounds pretty awesome to me! In fact, it should sound mighty appealing to anyone who might hear it!
- However, we don't see all that many people getting all that excited to hear and obey the Gospel. Why is that? Shouldn't they be overjoyed to know that there is salvation awaiting them in Jesus? Shouldn't they be excited to experience the righteousness of God? Certainly we would expect that to be the case, but...what we have to realize is that there is also a negative side to this good news that is extended to us in the Gospel. While the results of the Gospel message are very positive, we must recognize that there are also negative parts to the Gospel that actually make it extremely unappealing to some people. The positive results are one side of the Gospel coin, but we must be aware of the other side of the coin that isn't so positive. This morning, we are going to talk about those negative parts of the Gospel and why they make it so unappealing to so many. Paul actually has much to say on this subject within this Letter to the Romans, and so we will spend the majority of our time within its first six chapters beginning here in **Romans 1:18**.

## I. The Gospel convicts mankind of their sin.

### A. The good news of salvation is only made necessary because of man's sin.

1. Paul was so eager to preach this message of salvation because men are in great need of it, and they are in great need of it because of their sin. In **Romans 1:18**, we read that not only is the righteousness of God revealed within the Gospel, but we also learn of the wrath of God. That wrath is made evident *"against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men."*
2. Specifically within these verses from this point through the end of chapter one, Paul is focusing on the sins of the Gentiles...and what a list of sins this is. Paul begins this section by stating that though the Gentiles were not God's chosen people, they were still without excuse because God made His existence evident through the creation that they saw all around themselves. (**Romans 1:19,20**) However, even though they could not ignore the existence of God, they behaved as if they had by failing to give thanks, giving their hearts over to darkness, becoming foods, and exchanging the glory of God for images of man, birds, and animals. (**Romans 1:21-23**) The remainder of the chapter details just how deprived the Gentiles became through plain and simply fleshly behavior. They truly needed the Gospel.
3. And yet, they were not the only ones that needed the Gospel. While Paul convicts the Gentiles of their many sins in chapter 1, Paul then shifts his attention to the Jews and shows them that they too were guilty of sin that necessitated the Gospel being preached to them. **Romans 3:1-11** clearly shows us that while the Jews might have been sticking their noses up at the Gentiles for the sins they were committing, the truth of the matter is that the Jews themselves were guilty of even the same sins themselves. This leads us to the conclusion that is so clearly stated in

**Romans 3:23**, *"for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God."* Salvation is a wonderful thing to obtain, but it is only needed because of our sin that is brought to light in the Gospel.

- B. This is unappealing because men don't like to be told that they have done something wrong.
1. I can't think of a single person that I know who would honestly say that they are big fans of being told that they are wrong about something. Forget sin for a minute...just think about simply being told that you're doing something wrong or you're doing something the wrong way. If we're all being honest, then we'll have to admit that we just don't like hearing such things.
  2. Now, let's ratchet up the heat and consider that within the Gospel we are told that Jesus had to come to earth to give His life because we have sinned against God. Even if we are accepting of such a thing, that still isn't something that we are all that excited to hear. Now consider the person who isn't concerned about pleasing God. All they are hearing is that "we" don't approve of something they are doing. Even if we try to explain that we're only holding to God's standard, they still don't like hearing that they have done or are doing something wrong. That type of message can be extremely negative to the ears of many people, and it is sometimes the hurdle that hinders people from accepting and acting upon the Gospel. For those who don't like hearing about their sin, they're definitely not going to enjoy hearing the next part of the Gospel that is unappealing, and that is their need to stop sinning.

## II. The Gospel calls mankind to repentance.

- A. God's grace is only accessed by those that are willing to change their lives.
1. It is truly a blessing to be able to access the righteousness, mercy, and grace of God. That part of the message of the Gospel can bring so much joy and hope, but it only comes after we are willing to accept the need to repent and change our lives. This necessity of the Gospel message is clearly seen in **Romans 6** and particularly in **vv.8-19**.
  2. Paul begins this section of this letter by focusing on a hypothetical question that might be posed by those who are receiving this letter. The question would be something along the lines of, *"If we are saved by the grace of God, then can't we just go back to living as we already were since we've received grace?"* This question is emphatically answered by Paul when he states, *"May it never be! How shall we who died to sin still live in it?" (Romans 6:2)* The following verses then go on to describe how our conversion to Christ, emphasized in baptism, is a turning point in our lives where the old person of sin dies and a new creature is born.
  3. With this being the case, Paul beginning in **v.8** speaks of how the new creation is no longer a slave to the master of death and sin, and so we are to no longer let sin reign in our mortal bodies by obeying the lust of the flesh. We are not longer to present ourselves as instruments of unrighteousness, but we are to only present ourselves as instruments of righteousness in God. That is repentance! It is making the change from living according to our own desires and now living only according to the will of God. The wonderful salvation that is told to us within the Gospel message demands that we make repentance real within our lives.
- B. Unfortunately, men don't like being told that they need to change how they live.
1. Just as people normally don't enjoy being told that they are wrong in some sort of way, they are equally perturbed if they are further told that they need to actually change their behavior. It is one thing to be told by someone that what they are doing is wrong, and yet that person still allows it to go on for whatever reason. It only makes things more difficult when it is demanded that we change and do things differently.
  2. This is especially true when we consider just how far some people are from living lives that resemble the lives that God demands of His people. The further a society gets away from God, the more depraved the behavior becomes. Additionally, those who are engaged in such behavior don't often see their behavior as being wrong in any way. Therefore, when told that

they are sinning and are in need of the saving mercy of God through the Gospel, some people are totally turned off by such a message and don't want to listen. However, the next portion of the Gospel message that should only motivate people to respond accordingly still seems to serve as more of a roadblock and hindrance than a motivating factor. Our final portion of the Gospel that can make the Gospel message unappealing is the existence of hell and the fact that it is eternal punishment.

### III. The Gospel warns mankind of the punishment of hell.

#### A. Those who refuse to change will be eternal condemned.

1. Time and time again throughout these first six chapters of Romans we find allusions to the punishment of hell. Arguably the most memorable verse that speaks to the horrible results of sin that leads us to an understanding of hell is that of **Romans 6:23** where Paul states, *"For the wages of sin is death."* If one does not acknowledge and repent of sin...then they will die.
2. This isn't the first time that Paul speaks of death in this way within these first few chapters. Back in **Romans 1:32** we read, *"Those who practice such things are worthy of death."* In the following chapter Paul states, *"But because of your stubbornness and unrepentant heart you are storing up wrath for yourself in the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God.....There will be tribulation and distress for every soul of man who does evil, of the Jew first and also for the Greek."* (**Romans 2:5,9**)
3. In **Romans 5:12**, Paul writes concerning death, *"Therefore, just as through one man sin entered into the world, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men, because all sinned."* The death that is being described in all of these verses is referring to the death that takes place when sin enters the life of a person. If God is the source of all life then our separation from Him can only be described as death. When we are not in fellowship with God then we are spiritually dead and our only eternal outcome will be to experience the second death that John alludes to through the Revelation that he wrote by inspiration. (**Revelation 2:11,20:6,20:14,21:8**) Specifically, John writes in **Revelation 21:8** that those who sin will be those who will experience the second death.

#### B. Men don't like the thought of punishment...especially an eternal punishment!

1. We can probably all see where we're going now, right? When it comes to the message of the Gospel, salvation is the absolute desired end result, but that only comes after we have spoken words that convict sin, call for repentance, and warn of the dangers of burning in hell for eternity. For those who truly desire to please God and live for His will, they will hopefully be willing to accept the truths of this message and respond in faith like those who are referred to in **Romans 6:17**. This is what God wants more than anything else.
2. However, the sad reality is that many people will be turned off by this difficult and yet necessary message. They will hear accusations of sin, demands of change, and the scare tactics of hell instead of a fervent plea that they consider their souls condition. That should be our greatest desire just as it was for Paul. We should simply want for people to give a fair hearing to the message, and yet that won't always happen because some people are simply going to be turned off by these teachings of sin, repentance, and hell.

So what are we to do then? Would we be wise in simply cutting these portions of the Gospel out when we are seeking to teach those who are lost? Should we ignore their sin, need for repentance, and the reality of hell? Should we seek to water down the message so that it will be easier to hear and accept? The reality is that human wisdom would suggest such things at times. Some people would say that this is exactly what we ought to do. However, this message of the Gospel is not our message. It is God's message, and we are not at liberty to change it in anyway shape or form. Therefore, may we only speak the truth of God's Word and Gospel and make sure to share the Gospel in its entirety when we have opportunity. Sure some people might be turned off by it, but that is their decision and not ours. May we only strive to be strong and dedicated servants of our God by share Good News in its entirety to those who are lost and dying in this broken and desperate world.