

Title: Are You Ready to Preach Christ?

Text: Romans 1: 14-18

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Are you ready to preach Christ?

**Romans 1: 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 about to show the offense of men who were false preachers. He addresses them in chapter 2. They may have been men who denied Christ altogether. Or they most likely were like some who had professed faith in Christ but were yet mingling law with grace. The problem with those men is they were not sent to preach. It was evident because they mixed law with grace. They had no idea of the offense they were committing.

1 Timothy 1: 7: Desiring to be teachers of the law; understanding neither what they say, nor whereof they affirm.

**Proposition:** Preachers must preach the gospel of Christ which Paul preached: 1) Paul declares the Righteousness of God wherein believers are accepted of God is the righteousness of Christ freely given by God through God-given faith in Christ, apart from the works of the law. 2) Therefore, Paul declares throughout this letter, that the chief sin which believers do not continue in, after being called to faith in Christ, is the sin of turning back to the law. Those are the two chief points Paul made in every letter, especially in this letter of Romans. That is what we must preach constantly.

Since Paul will deal with these false preachers, Paul begins by giving two reasons he is ready to preach the gospel of Christ. Then he shows what God does with those who will not continue to preach the gospel of Christ.

**Divisions:** 1) The first reason Paul was ready to preach the gospel of Christ 2) The second reason Paul was ready to the preach the gospel of Christ 3) We see what God does to those who return to the law from the gospel of Christ.

**I. THE FIRST REASONS PAUL WAS READY TO PREACH THE GOSPEL OF CHRIST IS BECAUSE HE WAS NOT ASHAMED OF IT**

**Romans 1: 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. 17: For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, The just shall live by faith.**

**The Gospel is the Power of God**

Paul knew by experience that the gospel is the power by which God calls his chosen people to Christ our Salvation. The gospel IS “the gospel of Christ”: the proclamation of who Christ is, why he came, what he did, where he is now, what he is doing now, what he shall do. The whole counsel of God is preached by preaching Christ and him crucified.

Romans 1: 1:... separated unto the gospel of God, 2: (Which he had promised afore by his prophets in the holy scriptures,) 3 Concerning his Son Jesus Christ our Lord, which was made of the seed of David according to the flesh; 4: And declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the

spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead: 5: By whom we have received grace and apostleship, for obedience to the faith among all nations, for his name:

## **Unto Salvation**

The gospel of Christ is “the POWER OF GOD UNTO SALVATION.” It is the very power denied by those with a form of godliness. (Rom 2: 20) By the preaching of the gospel, God in power, “Cast[s] down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bring[s] into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ.” (2 Cor 10: 5) He does it in the first hour and for the rest of our lives through the hearing of the gospel of Christ, the hearing of Faith—Christ’s faithfulness.

By the gospel, in the beginning, God in power reveals our guilt under the law turning us FROM our so-called righteous obedience UNTO the righteous obedience of Christ our Salvation, revealing in us that Christ is our Righteousness. By this power of God, sinners are made willing to believe Christ is all our Righteousness and all our Salvation in whom we are complete and accepted of God forever.

Then the rest of our lives, by the gospel, God keeps us UNTO the day our salvation is complete. By continually hearing of Christ, of his faithfulness, of our perfection in him: our faith is grown, we are grown in grace to serve in newness of spirit, and the fleshly deeds of turning again to self is mortified—especially the fleshly deed of thinking our law obedience can mortify our flesh—that is wickedness turning to wickedness to mortify wickedness. By the gospel, we have been saved, are being saved and shall be saved.

**Application:** Do you want to see a man’s flesh mortified through the Spirit? Do you want to see him repent from himself and believe on Christ? Do you want to see him honor God in his life? Then instead of preaching law and morality, preach Christ and him crucified.

Use the law to: 1) show how a sinner he has broken it; 2) to show how Christ fulfilled it and justified the elect of God from it; 3) to show that once we are born of the Spirit, through faith in Christ we have fulfilled the law perfectly, are dead to it and it is dead to us.

By the gospel, God reveals in our hearts that Christ is God’s Righteousness and our righteousness freely given to us. God reveals that the righteousness of the law we broke has been so honored, even magnified, for God and for his elect, not by our obedience to the law, but by the faithfulness of Jesus Christ unto the death of the cross that our sin is put away, we are justified, and we are made the righteousness of God in him. This is the point Paul is working toward.

Romans 3: 20: Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight: for by the law is the knowledge of sin. 21: But now the righteousness of God without the law is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets; 22: Even the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ...

The righteousness of God is manifest, not by our faith in Christ, but by the faithfulness of Christ himself who loved his people and gave himself for us on the cross. His faithfulness is where the righteousness of God is manifest and how sinners are justified through faith in Christ.

Galatians 2: 16 Knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law, but by the FAITH OF JESUS CHRIST, even we have BELIEVED IN JESUS CHRIST, that we might be justified by the FAITH OF CHRIST, and not by the works of the law: for by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified...

After showing that sinners are justified by grace through faith in Christ, apart from the works of the law, in Romans 4, Paul shows that Abraham was made the righteousness of God through faith 430 years before the law was given.

Then in chapter 5, Paul shows how Adam was a type of Christ, concluding “as by one man’s disobedience many were made sinners, so by the OBEDIENCE OF ONE shall many be MADE RIGHTEOUS.” (Rom 5: 19)

Knowing men want to bring in the law for sanctification, Paul declares in Romans 6, that God’s elect so literally died when Christ died, that before the all-seeing eye of God, it is as impossible for the believer who is viewed in Christ to sin as it is for a man dead and buried to sin.

Romans 6: 1: What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound? 2: God forbid. How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein?...7: For he that is dead is freed from sin.

Then Paul declares that God’s elect died in Christ so that not only are we dead to sin, we are dead to the law and the law is dead to us. By Christ’s lawful work for us on the cross, and by his work in us by his Spirit, we are now lawfully married to Christ so that by his incorruptible Seed within us, by the Holy Spirit within us, our new spirit is full of good works which are: love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance: against such there is no law. The law was not made for a righteous man. (Gal 4: 22-23; 1 Tim 1: 9)

Romans 7:1: Know ye not, brethren, (for I speak to them that know the law,) how that the law hath dominion over a man as long as he liveth?...4: Wherefore, my brethren, ye also are become dead to the law by the body of Christ; that ye should be married to another, even to him who is raised from the dead, that we should bring forth fruit unto God...6: But now we are delivered from the law, that being dead wherein we were held; that we should serve in newness of spirit, and not in the oldness of the letter.

Then Paul sums it all up in Romans 8, showing that Christ is so much the fulfillment of the law for us, making the believer the righteousness of God in Christ, it is as impossible for the law to condemn us as it is for the law to condemn Christ. We are dead to the law, dead to sin and dead to death because Christ in the flesh condemned sin in our flesh by fulfilling the righteousness of the law for us in our midst. Not that we can now fulfill the law, but Christ alone has fulfilled the law and is our righteousness through faith in him.

Romans 8: 1: There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. 2 For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death. 3 For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh: 4 That the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.

Paul even went so far as to say that God says of us, “Ye are not in the flesh but in the Spirit if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you.” (Rom 8: 9) “For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God. When Christ, our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory.” (Col 3: 3-4)

This is the only message God will use to make a believer, by the Holy Spirit, to serve God in newness of spirit, looking to Christ in faith, rather than to the letter of the law and self. It is how the deeds of the flesh are mortified. False preachers would use the law to frighten the believer but believers “have not received the Spirit of bondage again to fear, but we have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father.”

(Rom 8: 15-16) Through the gospel which declares our perfection is Christ and in him we are complete, the Spirit mortifies the deeds of our flesh, especially the filthy deed of going back to the law to mortify the deeds of our flesh.

Therefore the law of faith, rather than the law of works, ends and excludes all our boasting, by revealing that in Christ God is just and the Justifier of him which believeth in Jesus. All glory goes to him.

Romans 3: 26: To declare, I say, at this time his righteousness: that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus. 27 Where is boasting then? It is excluded. By what law? of works? Nay: but by the law of faith.

### **The Same Power unto All the Elect**

The gospel is the power of God unto ALL THOSE GOD CALLS: “to the Jew first, and also to the Greek.”

Romans 3: 22:...for there is no difference: 23: For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God.

So that is the first reason Paul was ready to preach the gospel—Paul knew by experience that God uses only the truth of his Son to call out his people, to keep us and to grows us by the knowledge of Christ.

**Application:** It is the weightiest responsibility in the world to speak in the name of God. A man must be sure God has sent him to preach. God gives sufficiency to those he sends. And it is only by God’s sufficiency that a man will remain faithful when sinners begin to gnash on you—and they will. Man by nature hates the gospel of Christ. My advice to any man who has a congregation interested in calling him is this: from the outset preach this message as boldly and as dogmatically as God will enable you. If the congregation will reject the gospel of Christ, it is better to find out from the outset before you unequally yoke yourself to them.

## **II. THE SECOND REASON PAUL WAS READY TO PREACH THE GOSPEL.**

**Romans 1: 18: For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness.**

Paul was ready to preach the truth, and only the truth, because as Paul said in 1 Corinthians 9: 16:...yea, woe is unto me, if I preach not the gospel! The Spirit of God used Peter to give the same warning about false preachers.

2 Peter 2: 1:...[they] bring upon themselves swift destruction...[The wrath of God is revealed from heaven against them] 4: For if God spared not the angels that sinned, but cast them down to hell, and delivered them into chains of darkness, to be reserved unto judgment; [so God will reserve the false preacher to the judgment of hell] 17:...to whom the mist of darkness is reserved for ever...21: For it had been better for them not to have known THE WAY OF RIGHTEOUSNESS, than, after they have known it, to turn from THE HOLY COMMANDMENT.

It had been better not to know Christ the Way of Righteousness and the gospel which is the Holy Commandment, than to know it and turn from it back to the law, “For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness.” (Rom 1: 18)

### **Holding the Truth in Unrighteousness**

How does a man, particularly a preacher, “hold the truth in unrighteousness?” Christ is THE Way of Righteousness. The Holy Commandment is the gospel of Christ: “believe on Christ, continue in Christ, preach only Christ.” When a man does not believe and preach clearly and continually that Christ is All the believers righteousness and acceptance with God and that the flesh profits nothing before, during or after conversion then he “holds the truth in unrighteousness.”

Paul is chiefly dealing with the unlawful use of the law. When a man, instead of using the law only for the purpose of declaring that all under the law are guilty, insists believers are yet under the law, teaching that “except ye keep the law of Moses you cannot be saved”, he is holding the truth in unrighteousness. (Acts 15: 1, 5-11) Some say a believer is under the law for wisdom, some for righteousness, some for sanctification, some for redemption but whatever the reason it is an unlawful use of the law. Christ is made all of these unto the believer. (1 Cor 1: 30-31)

Instead of continually preaching the good news that “Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone that believes” (Rom 10: 4), the false preacher says “But don’t take that too far.” He uses the law to frighten believers attempting to make them use the law to mortify the deeds of their flesh and to motivate them to serve God. It never works. Only by the gospel does Christ constrain us, by his love for us, so that we believe him and serve him in love. Any other motive or manner used is legal and unrighteous.

### **Ungodliness and Unrighteousness**

Turning back to the law--mixing law and grace—is unrighteousness because doing so a man breaks both tables of the law. Notice in verse 18 the words “ungodliness and unrighteousness.”

“Ungodliness” refers to the first table of the law which is toward God.

Exodus 20: 3: Thou shalt have no other gods before me. 5...for I the LORD thy God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me;

“Unrighteousness” refers to the second table of the law which is toward our fellow man.

Exodus 20: 12: Honour thy father and thy mother:...13 Thou shalt not kill. 14 Thou shalt not commit adultery. 15 Thou shalt not steal. 16: Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbour. 17: Thou shalt not covet thy neighbour’s house,...

When a man believes and preaches that acceptance with God in any way hinges upon our obedience to the law—be it without Christ or in addition to Christ—then he breaks the whole law: the first table by setting up man as God, by worshipping and serving the creature more than the Creator; the second table by transgressing in every point against those to whom he preaches: he dishonors, murders, commits adultery, steals, bears false witness and make merchandise of their souls through covetousness. The apostle Peter applied all these transgressions to the false preacher in 2 Peter 2. **And be sure to get this:** because he turns from CHRIST the GODMAN to the law, first and foremost, his breaking of the first table is against Christ who is God and his breaking of the second table is against Christ who is Man.

It is a mystery to the natural man how that he can be so sincere in teaching believers that except they keep the law they cannot be saved but yet he is actually breaking the whole law by doing so. But one reason the gospel is called “the holy commandment” is because the gospel reveals the only way a sinner keeps all the commandments of the law is through faith in Christ. And the only way he teaches others to keep the law is by teaching them to believe on Christ. Believing on Christ is what it is “to hear the law and do the law.” If a man has ears to hear, Christ said this very thing in his sermon on the mount.

Matthew 5: 17: Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil. 18: For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled. 19: Whosoever therefore shall break one of these least commandments, and shall teach men so, he shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven: but whosoever shall do and teach them, the same shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven. 20: For I say unto you, That except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven.

The righteousness which exceeds, the righteousness we must have to enter heaven, is the righteousness of Christ, the only one who has ever fulfilled the law of God. Through the gospel the Holy Commandment comes in power into our hearts commanding us “believe on my Son” thus through faith in Christ, apart from our works, the righteousness of Christ is made our righteousness. It is why Paul concludes,

Romans 3: 31: Do we then make void the law through faith? God forbid: yea, we establish the law. [through faith.]

**Application:** The man who preaches must use the law only to declare men guilty and he must declare the Righteousness of the law is given us through faith in Christ, apart from our works. I would advise any man who is thinking of preaching to do a thorough study of 2 Peter 2. The wrath of God is revealed from heaven against those who “hold the truth in unrighteousness.”

Let me remind you again, Paul is working his way to these false preachers who were teaching that in addition to Christ, the law must be added. Throughout Romans Paul says: we establish the law only through faith in Christ. The chief sin the believer no longer continues in is, first and foremost, the sin of turning again to the law after that we have been called to faith in Christ.

### **III. NOW LET ME BRIEFLY SHOW YOU WHAT HAPPENS WHEN MEN MIX LAW WITH THE GOSPEL.**

Paul first uses the Gentiles who only had the light of nature.

**Romans 1: 19: Because that which may be known of God is manifest in them; for God hath shewed it unto them. 20: For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse: 21: Because that, when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened. 22: Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools, 23: And changed the glory of the uncorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and fourfooted beasts, and creeping things.**

We saw this in Pharaoh. They had the light of nature. But they turned from that light and imagined what they deemed to be wiser—in other words, they hardened their own hearts against God. Paul applies this to the false teachers in chapter 2.

Romans 2: 17: Behold, thou art CALLED a Jew, and retest in the law, and makest thy boast of God, 18: And knowest his will, [the last phrase goes with this—‘being instructed out of the law’—they knew God’s will was for them to believe on the Messiah for the shadows of Christ in the ceremonies and the word of the prophets declared it. Yet they approved things that they deemed more excellent] and approvest the things that are MORE excellent.

Like the Gentiles who rejected the light given them, it was more excellent in the imaginations of these false preachers to add their law keeping to the blood of the Substitute. So when they knew God, they glorified him

not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened. Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools.

### **Judicial Reprobation**

What will God do when men continue in this rebellion? He judicially, justly, gives men up to a reprobate minds. This is the wrath of God revealed. Paul is showing us the Gentiles here but this is what God will also do to those who mingle law and grace. He did so to Israel when they rejected Christ.

**Romans 1: 24: Wherefore God also gave them up to uncleanness...25: Who changed the truth of God into a lie, and worshipped and served the creature more than the Creator, who is blessed for ever. Amen. 26 For this cause God gave them up unto vile affections:...28 And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate mind, to do those things which are not convenient;**

These awful things they did was due to God giving them over to a reprobate mind. It describes the old world in Noah's day who God destroyed by the flood; it describes Sodom and Gomorrah who God destroyed with fire and stones from heaven; it describes Israel who God turned over in judicial blindness; it describes OUR NATION, TODAY. You do not want to be the preacher who leads men into this judgment! By God giving them up, the land became full of queers and every other kind of lewdness as well.

**Romans 1: 26: For this cause God gave them up unto vile affections: for even their women did change the natural use into that which is against nature: 27: And likewise also the men, leaving the natural use of the woman, burned in their lust one toward another; men with men working that which is unseemly, and receiving in themselves that recompence of their error which was meet...29 Being filled with all unrighteousness, fornication, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness; full of envy, murder, debate, deceit, malignity; whisperers, 30: Backbiters, haters of God, despiteful, proud, boasters, inventors of evil things, disobedient to parents, 31: Without understanding, covenantbreakers, without natural affection, implacable, unmerciful: 32: Who knowing the judgment of God, that they which commit such things are worthy of death, not only do the same, but have pleasure in them that do them.**

**Be sure to get this:** if God did this to those who only had the light of nature, it will be far worse for those who turn from the gospel back to the law. The chief blame goes to freewill, works preachers who use the law to preach morality, rather than using the law to declare sinners guilty and who refuse to preach Christ is the Righteousness of God given freely by God through faith.

### **Sin is in the Heart**

Now, when free will, works preachers bring a sermon against all these things, the congregation says, "Amen." Everyone is so proud they are not like other men. They do not do these things—not outwardly. Paul knew those false teachers would be thinking the same in their hearts. So now Paul turns to them, who had the light of the gospel yet preached law and says, "You are no different than them."

**Romans 2: 1: Therefore thou art inexcusable, O man, whosoever thou art that judgest: for wherein thou judgest another, thou condemnest thyself; for thou that judgest doest the same things...**

Sin is in the heart. Until a man is born of the Spirit of God, created anew in righteousness and true holiness of Christ, his heart is only sin continually.

**Romans 2: 13: (For not the hearers of the law are just before God, but the doers of the law shall be justified...)**

## **The Heart Must Be Made New**

The law must be kept by a holy man, perfectly. Christ is that One. So to hear the law and do the law is to shut our mouths in guilt and believe on Christ. But this will only be done when sinner is given a new, clean heart. Paul shows it in Romans 2: 26-27.

**Romans 2: 26: Therefore if the uncircumcision keep the righteousness of the law, shall not his uncircumcision be counted for circumcision? 27: And shall not uncircumcision which is by nature, if it fulfil the law, judge thee, who by the letter and circumcision dost transgress the law?**

How could a Gentile who never had the law and never tried to keep it, yet keep the righteousness of the law? How could these Jews that had the law, and tried to keep it, not attain to the righteousness of the law? Here is why:

Romans 9: 30: What shall we say then? That the Gentiles, which followed not after righteousness, have attained to righteousness, even the righteousness which is of faith. 31: But Israel, which followed after the law of righteousness, hath not attained to the law of righteousness. 32: Wherefore? Because they sought it not by faith, but as it were by the works of the law. For they stumbled at that stumblingstone;

The gospel is the power of God by which God the Spirit gives God's elect a new heart and faith to rest in Christ—the work of God make us righteous and accepted, apart from our works.

**Romans 2: 28: For he is not a Jew, which is one outwardly; neither is that circumcision, which is outward in the flesh: 29: But he is a Jew, which is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit, and not in the letter; whose praise is not of men, but of God.**

**Application:** The man who preaches the gospel must teach that the only way the righteousness of the law is established is through faith in Christ, by God making the heart new and giving us faith to believe on Christ. A preacher must preach the gospel of Christ holding nothing back, "For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness."

Remember, believer, as accepted, as righteous, as free from sin, death and hell, as Christ is with the Father, so are those he has called to faith in him right now though we yet dwell in this earth.

1 John 4:17: Herein is our love made perfect, that we may have boldness in the day of judgment: because as he is, so are we in this world.

1John 3:3: And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure.

By the hearing of the gospel, by the Holy Spirit, we purify ourselves from turning again to the law by staying on Christ in faith. By the continual hearing of the gospel, by the Holy Spirit, we purify ourselves from looking to ourselves, from turning back to the law to make ourselves accepted with God, by looking only to Christ. By the gospel, by the Holy Spirit revealing Christ in us continually, we know that right there with Christ we are accepted in glory. Believe on Christ and rest in him. Continue to hear the gospel for the gospel is the power of God unto salvation.

Amen!



