

God's Gospel

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- [0 : 0 0] Well, happy Thanksgiving, everyone. You're welcome to the three of you. The rest of you have a horrible Thanksgiving.
- May your turkey be burnt. So turn with me to Romans chapter 1, please. Romans chapter 1, you unfriendly group of people.
- If you are from out of town and just visiting us, welcome. Please don't take the example of the people that are here. It is good to have you here for our worship service.
- And I hope you enjoy your Thanksgiving weekend with your family, your friends that you are visiting here this day. We have just beginning a study on the book of Romans.
- But I don't think you will have too hard of a time jumping into this passage or an understanding of where we are in this text.
- [1 : 0 1] It was actually close to 2,000 years ago that Paul was in the city of Corinth. And after completing his third missionary journey, he sat down with a man named Tertius.
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- He sat down with a man named Tertius. In fact, he sat down with a man named Tertius. In fact, he includes over 25 names. And he tells them, mentions so-and-so's family, their brothers, their sisters, their groups.
- He sends them all greetings. That through Paul's ministry, which was to the east of Rome, along the many roads that Rome had built, Paul had obviously come into contact with a great many of the saints, these other missionaries, these other church leaders, church attenders.
- So he was intimately acquainted with them, and he longed to visit them. By the time Paul dictates this letter, he makes it clear to them that he wants to go to Spain.
- [2 : 3 5] Spain is the untouched land. But before he goes there, he wants to go to Jerusalem. He needs to go to Jerusalem. As he's been doing this ministry, he's been collecting gifts to be offered to the church in Jerusalem because they have been under hardship.
- So this amazing thing starts to happen. These Gentile churches start to begin supporting the first church in Jerusalem, the Jewish churches. The walls are being broken down.
- But on his way to Spain, Paul wants to come and visit the saints in Rome. If you notice in verse 15 of Romans chapter 1, he simply tells them why he wants to visit them.
- He says, I am eager to preach the gospel to you also who are in Rome.
- The word gospel was not the focus of Paul's ministry. The gospel was the fixation of Paul's ministry.
- [3 : 4 6] It is everything and all things to him. In fact, the word gospel is mentioned over 60 times in this letter. This is the subject that I want to discuss with you on this Thanksgiving weekend.
- The gospel. In fact, the gospel is the theme of the book of Romans. Look down at verse 16. For he simply says, 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.

For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith for faith as it is written. The righteous shall live by faith. Understand what he says there.

The gospel is the righteousness of God revealed. This isn't simply the theme of the book of Romans.

It is the theme of our entire Bible. So this morning I am hoping to share with you perhaps a deeper understanding of the gospel.

[5 : 06] Please turn with me to verse 1. Just look up at Romans 1.1. And we are going to look at what Paul describes as God's gospel. Paul, a servant of Christ Jesus, called to be an apostle, set apart for the gospel of God.

Now if you've been with us the last couple of weeks, we've covered this section. It's an introduction of himself. He introduces himself as a, not just a servant of Christ Jesus, but literally in the Greek means a slave of Christ Jesus.

A servant is one who takes time off. A slave does not. A slave is held by the attention of his master.

He's called to be an apostle, which means he wasn't self-appointed. He was drawn by God to be an apostle, that God specifically called him to the function of an apostle.

That word apostle we understood from last week is the idea of being sent forward. It's almost like an ambassador to represent the one who sends you.

[6 : 21] God has called him, and we learn in Acts chapter 9, that is the testimony of who Paul is. It says that Jesus Christ appeared to him. He was blinded by the light.

And then God sends this man, Ananias, to go get him. And Ananias doesn't want anything to do with him, because Paul was known to be an evil, wicked man.

I don't want to go near that guy. And then God specifically tells Ananias that Paul is his chosen instrument to carry the Lord's name to the Gentiles, kings, and children of Israel.

So notice, we finally get set apart for the gospel of God. The very root understanding of gospel is just simply good news.

Good news. You could be back in the old day, and we have an outline of the text, and what we're going to be looking at is the characteristics of the gospel. If you are new here, we're doing a block diagramming, just demonstrating how we study God's word.

[7 : 31] So you can see in the text where we pull the points and how I look at it. This is how I study God's word. But if you see the word gospel, there's two characteristics that follow under the word.

It's for the gospel, which he promised beforehand. And the second aspect is concerning his son. But this good news that Paul is talking about the gospel, it is God's gospel, that God is the source of the gospel.

It is the gospel that is revealed by God. It is set forth by God. It is set by God. It is God's good news. The gospel is not simply about God.

It is the message of God. He is saying that the gospel that I have been set apart to proclaim is God's gospel.

He's the author. He's the owner. Now, as you can see from this overhead, what do we know about this gospel? Well, there's two characteristics. The gospel that I want to share briefly with you.

[8 : 39] First, it says the gospel was promised beforehand. Verse two, which he promised beforehand through his prophets in the holy scriptures.

Now, why does Paul make that statement? And this is a huge statement that he's making. What he's saying to these believers in Rome is, what I'm about to teach you is nothing new.

It's actually been stated over and over and over in the Old Testament, which to them, Old Testament, what are you talking about? We only have one Testament, right?

It was the first Testament, so to speak. But that is the message that had come generally through the Jewish people, through their Bible that they had at that time, the scriptures.

But what he wants to really point down is, what I'm teaching you now about this gospel, not only is it not new, it's not an afterthought.

[9 : 41] That this gospel that I'm going to be sharing with you in the book of Romans was part of God's original plan. It's nothing new. It's not like, oh boy, things got really messed up in the Old Testament.

They kind of didn't do things right. Let me get a New Testament going so we can figure things out. This is not what's happening here. That this gospel was promised beforehand.

We see this through the prophets who announced this gospel, and they wrote it down in the Holy Scriptures. It's interesting, all too often I hear people, when trying to describe the difference between the New and Old Testament, they say, well, the Old Testament was about the law.

The New Testament is about grace. But that's not true. We see just as much grace, but we have a fuller understanding.

Why? Because we're going to see this in the book of Romans as we go through. But this isn't new news that Paul has for them. It's old news.

[10 : 55] Let me ask you a question. Can you answer the question correctly, that is the gospel preached in the Old Testament?

In fact, all you need to do is go back to the first book of the Bible, Genesis. We see the gospel preached in Genesis 3. We heard about the promised Messiah that would eventually come as soon as Adam and Eve had sinned.

In fact, there are over 300 verses that point to the gospel in the Old Testament through prophecies.

And if you remember your New Testament, you'll remember after Jesus has rose again, Jesus had encountered these men on the road to Emmaus, if you remember that story.

And Jesus, they didn't quite recognize him. It says that Jesus had hid himself from their faces, but it tells the story that Jesus was actually teaching them the gospel that they had somehow missed through the Old Testament.

[12 : 03] And he said to them, this is Luke 24, 25. He says, and he said to them, O foolish ones, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken.

Was it not necessary that the Christ should suffer these things and enter into his glory? Remember, the disciples didn't believe that Jesus had rose again.

They did not believe even the fact that he told them he was. Three days later, here he is walking on this road, but they still don't believe they're down in heart. In fact, the angel had to send Mary and some of the other Marys and a whole bunch of these people that had come to the tomb to go out and tell the disciples that, in fact, Jesus had risen.

Jesus said, was it not necessary that the Christ should suffer these things and enter into his glory?

And beginning with Moses and all the prophets, Jesus interpreted to them in all the scriptures the things concerning himself. It's interesting, and I shared this story before with you.

[13 : 16] We also know the story from Isaiah 53. If you do not know, let me read it to you. Isaiah 53, the prophet, hundreds and hundreds and hundreds of years before Jesus appeared, simply wrote, Surely he has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows.

Yet we esteemed him stricken, smitten by God and afflicted. But he was pierced for our transgressions. He was crushed for our iniquities.

Upon him was the chastisement that brought us peace. And with his wounds we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray.

We have turned everyone to his own way. And the Lord has laid on him the iniquity of us all. There's a man that I know who's now currently a pastor of Jewish background.

In fact, he has a PhD in psychology. He was in Europe, and he thought he knew everything about his Bible, the Jewish text. He had studied it in the synagogues as a young man.

[14 : 26] When that text was read to him, the missionary simply asked him, Where does that come from? He says, Well, the New Testament, of course. When he turned to him and showed him, he said, At that moment I believed that Jesus was foretold.

So the first characteristic of the gospel, it's not a new gospel. It is in fact an old gospel. The second characteristic of the gospel is that it is found in Jesus and powered by the Holy Spirit.

Take a look at verse 3 in your Bibles. It says, It says, If you are looking for a verse to augment your understanding of the Trinity, this is the verse.

This is a verse that is fundamentally loaded with Trinitarian theology. What we're talking about here is God's gospel. It is God's message. It was God's intent for this to happen.

Jesus Christ was the one who acted upon it under the power of the Holy Spirit. As we all know from our studies in the life of Christ, Jesus is both 100% man and 100% God.

[15 : 50] Amen? It is why he can be the perfect mediator between us and God. Now a lot of people kind of, even when some of the commentaries, they really believe that the emphasis of these verses is trying to demonstrate that God was 100% man and 100% human.

And, you know, they talk about him being associated with the spirit of holiness and then with David. But that's not what's really going on here. It's essentially what I just stated.

That God's gospel involved the plan by God where Jesus worked as the promised Messiah through the power of the Spirit. If you remember the baptism of Jesus Christ, John baptized him.

And if you remember the Holy Spirit, like a dove descended upon him, God the Father simply stated, this is my beloved Son with whom I am well pleased.

And soon after that, Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit, went out into the wilderness and thus did his public ministry begin. You see, the gospel is to be centered on the work of Jesus in the power of the Spirit.

[17 : 07] This has always been God's plan. The gospel is a Trinitarian work. And the result is found in verse 5.

Through whom we have received grace and apostleship to bring about the obedience of faith for the sake of his name among all nations, including you who are called to belong to Jesus.

So Paul teaches them and teaches us that this gospel, God's gospel, is promised by God and the prophets through the Holy Scriptures. It is presented by Jesus, a descendant of David, which he's talking about being the promised Messiah through the line of David.

And it is powered by the Holy Spirit that is God's gospel. Drop down to verse 16 with me. Paul makes this incredible statement.

It says, 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.

[18 : 31] It is the power of God for salvation to everyone. Happy Thanksgiving.

This is the greatest thing in the world to be thankful for. There is nothing greater. This should excite you to the core of your soul.

This is what should define your existence. This is the purpose of your life. It's to be a slave of Christ living for the gospel.

To be called an apostle. That apostleship that he's talking about is not big A apostle, small A apostle. For there is no greater news.

Now, take a closer look at verse 16. For I am not ashamed of the gospel.

[19 : 41] Have you ever wondered what Paul means by this statement? It's a bit awkward. In fact, Paul is actually, he could have used many ways to state this.

Instead of saying, I'm not ashamed of the gospel, he could have simply said, I am proud of the gospel. I marvel at the gospel. I am thrilled with the gospel. I rejoice in the gospel.

I dance to the gospel. I give thanksgiving for the gospel. I glory in the gospel. I have complete confidence in the gospel. But he doesn't.

He says, I am not ashamed. Now, Paul is using a literary device, a figure of speech, so to speak, called a litote.

And it's to say something in an understated way in which an affirmative is expressed by the negative to the contrary.

[20 : 46] You might be walking down the road and someone would say, you know what? I see BK over there. That BK is a good-looking pastor.

You wouldn't say it that way. You'd kind of be a little bit more statement. You know, he's not a bad-looking pastor. You see what I'm saying there? Same truth, but it said to the negative.

You know, how was dinner last night? You know, honey, it wasn't too bad. Right? Why don't we say good? We just kind of go and use this other literary device. But he says, I am not ashamed of the gospel.

Now, let me ask you a question. Have you ever been ashamed of the gospel? Now, I know some of you might be thinking, no way, no how could you even say that to me.

I love Jesus. I love the gospel. I love what this means. But, before we go there, let me explain what the word ashamed means here.

[21 : 58] Ashamed means to experience a feeling or a sense of loss of status because of a particular event or activity.

What it means is, if you were to share the gospel, you would be seen less in the person's eyes that you are sharing that gospel with.

Let me ask you that question again. Have you ever been ashamed of the gospel? I think if we're honest with ourselves, the answer is yes.

that sometime in our lives we have felt ashamed of the gospel. The Bible gives us an example of another man in the New Testament who was called to be an elder, teacher of God's word, who, at times, was felt ashamed of the gospel.

His name was Timothy. He was Paul's primary disciple. 2 Timothy 2.18, Paul is encouraging him. He says, therefore, do not be ashamed about the testimony of our Lord.

[23 : 22] 2 Timothy 2.15, he says, do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a worker who has no need to be ashamed, rightly handling the word of God.

God. Why would Paul need to encourage Timothy in this way? There was moments in his young ministry where he felt ashamed of the gospel.

You know who else is going to feel this way? These Roman Christians. Christians. And I want you to think about to who this letter is written to. It is written to Christians in Rome.

Rome is the center of the greatest empire that ever existed until that time. We still talk about Rome outside of Christian circles.

We know what it means to be Caesar, the Roman legions, the greatest army that man had ever built that conquered the barbarians. It's also the hub of what they consider the greatest form of government, the republic.

[24 : 42] There was senators, there was wealthy people, all those that were famous in the world would have come to Rome. people. The fact of the matter is, as people became Christians and believed in this gospel, Paul's anticipating that this idea of loss of status might happen.

In fact, Paul knows personally that anybody who desires to share the gospel of God will face ridicule.

Will face ridicule. Paul is writing this letter in a city called Corinth. And if you remember, there's a few letters written to the Corinthian church.

First Corinthians especially states clearly that the gospel is a stumbling block to Jews and it is foolishness to the Greeks.

If you've read Acts, you know Paul has been ridiculed. And remember, we already went over Paul's CV, right?

[26 : 11] His resume. He is one of the greatest thinkers, greatest educators of his time. Yet he was ridiculed, mocked, scorned, beaten, imprisoned, tortured.

So the question we often ask ourselves, why on earth would these Christians want to share the gospel? The fact of the matter is, the world hates the gospel.

gospel. They despise the gospel. How do I know this?

The Bible tells us that our master, Jesus Christ, was crucified for being the living embodiment of the gospel.

So the question I'm sure we ask sometimes is, do I really want to be associated with something that brings shame and ridicule?

[27 : 24] Let's be honest. The Christian message is kind of interesting, don't you think? it's a story of a man who was born of a virgin who had a father who was a carpenter, but his real father was God, who lived in a land called Nowhere Nazareth.

He lived such a great life that the mob despised him, tortured him, killed him. that in fact, as they crucified him on the cross, the people mocked him.

They simply said he saved others, but he cannot save himself. He is the king of Israel, let him come down now from the cross and we will believe in him. he trusts in God, let God deliver him now if he desires him.

For he did say, I am the son of God, let's see if his father shows up and saves him. But he didn't, he died, he died no great hero, no great king.

So you are in the center of the world in Rome and you're now going to tell them, and they regarded their emperors as gods. You're now going to explain to them there is one true God and he's not reflected in any of these statues, these temples that you have here.

[28 : 58] That God is represented by his son who lived in nowhere land Israel. Oh yeah, where those crazy Jews live who are always fighting with everybody?

That's what you want to tell me? who's going to buy into that? Now if you're not convinced that you've actually felt the shame, let me give you a few examples of how we fine tune the gospel so it won't be so shameful for us.

One of the ways that we like to share the gospel is we talk about the philosopher of Jesus. You ever heard about the philosopher Jesus?

He taught about a better way, right? The fact of the matter is nobody in this world hates philosophy, right? They like it. It's your code. Nobody ever ridicules someone because of his code.

The fact of the matter is people like lively debates. We like to talk about Jesus' moral codes. We like the golden rule, right? Love others as you would love yourself.

[30 : 12] Actually, the golden rule kind of changes it. It's do unto others as you would have them do unto you. Where? Love your neighbor as yourself.

The fact of the matter is we introduce the gospel like it is some sort of set of competing ideas in the marketplace. The fact of the matter is we do so because we do not want to offend them, but we want to show them a better way of living.

If you can adopt this philosophy of how to raise your children, who to associate with on Sunday mornings, and how to manage your money, you might find Jesus.

In fact, they might love to come to your church, hang out, be sociable, but would you ever challenge them on their idols and their sin? Not a chance.

Another way we can talk about Jesus that is not so shameful is Jesus the hero. Look at how great Jesus was. He was really cool.

[31 : 19] He was the rebel. He was the original rebel. If you grew up in the 70s, you guys know what I'm talking about. That's how Jesus was predominantly taught. They used to get the revolution Bible, right?

That was the big thing. Jesus stuck it to the man, right? So we present Jesus this way. You can be a hero too.

You can be a hero just like Jesus. If you come to church, follow him, be a family guy, don't cheat on your spouse, don't lie, don't cheat on your taxes. Hey, man, he laid out these 10 commandments that are really helpful for you.

Get behind it. Let's put those 10 commandments back in school, right? That's going to bring all the change. See, the hero Jesus presents a man that you can say, if I work hard enough, if I try enough, I can be just like him.

And if you come to church, you can learn to be just like the hero Jesus. Would you like to be like Jesus? or you could present Jesus as the great teacher.

[32 : 32] We all like great insightful teaching, right? Remember the sermon on the mount? You can tell people like, blessed are the merciful for they shall receive mercy. Who doesn't like the merciful, right?

Who's going to mock mercy? You could say blessed are the pure in heart, right? For they shall see God. That sounds really nice.

like, come, know, you know, get to know this Jesus. You're pure in heart. Blessed are the peacemakers. Hey, you like peace? For they shall be called sons of God.

Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness sake. Talk about a social justice call. For theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

Merciful, pure in heart, peacemaking, persecuted for righteous sake. Nobody ridicules that gospel. We admire that gospel.

[33 : 34] Nobody ever has trouble with this message until you actually explain to them what does it mean to be poor in spirit. To actually explain that feeling compassionate is not the same thing as being compassionate.

Or you could simply say that Jesus is here to take away your problems. That Jesus is the therapy Jesus. Are you in trouble?

Does life have you down? Do you want freedom from fill in the blanks? Pornography, alcoholism, drugs, anxiety?

Do you want better marriage, better kids? Something worrying you? Are you under emotional toil? Come to Jesus. He will make things all right. Come.

Come. He's waiting for you. Knock on the door. Father. Fact is, this message never offends anybody.

[34 : 46] Nobody is turned off by that message. Now, some people will say, hey, I don't need any help. But I dig that Jesus. You need him. I don't.

So I'm not going to make fun of you for following him. Fact of the matter is, this Jesus offends nobody. The fact is, if you spend any amount of time thinking, how do I present someone, Jesus to someone, without offending him?

How can I get the greatest applause for Jesus? How can I get people to cheer for Jesus? This is code for, how do I present Jesus so that I will not be ridiculed?

That's what it is. How do I present Jesus so that I will not feel ashamed?

I'm going to be honest with you. I have been guilty of these things many, many times. When I was in university, mine was the philosophy Jesus. I wanted to show you that if you could think a better way, there would be better results for your life.

[36 : 07] And can I tell you something? It worked sometimes. It really did. I saw some men come to the saving faith of Jesus Christ when I challenged them with the ideas, philosophically speaking, that Jesus presented that they did not have.

these men came to church, they came to Bible study, but one of the things that some of them happened to them is that they began to think that they were superior because they had greater knowledge than other people.

Instead of becoming humble in their understanding of God, they became prideful in their understanding of God. That's not really understanding the gospel.

See, the gospel does not glory in the intellect. It does not glory in the moral code or any type of roll-up-your-sleeves effort.

The reason why the world hates the gospel is the gospel also calls your works filthy rags, calls your works dung, it calls your works refuse.

[37 : 25] And believe me, when I use those words, I'm actually giving you the polite political correctness for what the Bible actually says your works are. Never does it say that you are a little bit good.

Never does it say that you are somehow moving closer to God. And we fall for this trap all the time. Well, they're so moral, right? They're so clean-cut, clean-living.

They must be so close to Jesus. If I can just get them to come to church, get them over the line, but the truth of the matter is, my experience has taught me the more moral someone becomes, the further away they move from Jesus.

because they have this thought in their head that I can be good enough for Jesus but not really need Jesus. Listen, I get it. We don't want to be laughed at.

We don't want to be ridiculed, and I believe Paul knows that. That's why he puts this, I am not ashamed of the gospel. That's why he talks about these things. Listen, I don't want to be laughed at.

[38 : 39] I don't want to be ridiculed. When I share Jesus, I want to be invited back over for dinner. I want that promotion, the friendship.

It's Thanksgiving. You want peace in your family, right? But here's the hard truth. The gospel of Jesus Christ will always offend what Martin Lloyd-Jones calls the natural man.

the gospel will always offend the natural man. The natural man, when exposed, will always annoy, ridicule, and despise the truth.

Why is the gospel of the cross so offensive? Why do people ridicule us? Because the true gospel of Jesus Christ tells us that that we are so condemned, so unclean, so lost, and so hopeless, that if Jesus Christ had not died for me, I would never know God.

And I could never know what it means to be forgiven. God God, I would never know what God this message hurts. This message annoys.

[40 : 07] This message tells me that I am less than. This message tells me that I'm hopeless. This message, in fact, tells me that I am vile.

God will never fall. God will never fall. So the question is, do you really need to feel ashamed? The answer is no, because it's not you who are offensive.

In fact, by sharing the gospel, you are being and doing the most loving thing you could possibly do for something. but it's the gospel, in fact, that is offensive.

It's why the world hates it. It's why the world ridicules it. It's why the world greets you with scorn and sarcasm. You see, by the time Paul writes this gospel letter to this church in Rome, he's endured every type of ridicule, scorn, punishment, shame, and opposition that anyone could ever endure.

Soon, he will be heading to Jerusalem where he will preach the gospel. It will upset a group of people so much that they will begin beating him and torturing him.

[41 : 25] And then, he will be carted off to Rome at the expense of Rome to face the emperor. See, here's the issue that I have found.

If someone accepts the Jesus of our making, and don't get me wrong, God is praised, and God can be glorified in our mistakes, right? Like I said, I've shared the gospel wrong a great many times, but some have believed.

I've got friends that are pastors, elders, faithful husbands, wives, living for glory, honor their fathers, their mothers, daughters, even though I did it wrong.

But this is the danger. The good thing is that some will mature. They will, despite our efforts, when we did things wrong, they will do things right.

Because there's an element of truth in all those gospels presentations that I talked to you about. but some people will be all for Jesus until life doesn't go the way they want it to.

[42 : 41] They will become bitter and some of them will be angry with you, they will shame you, they will hurt you. You see, God isn't working the way you told them it would work.

If you simply trusted Jesus, the philosopher Jesus, the hero Jesus, the teacher Jesus, or the therapist Jesus, I can tell you dozens and dozens of stories where people grew angry at those who presented the gospel in such a way because they didn't talk about one of the first aspects of what it is to be a Christian.

And that means you're no longer a slave to sin, but you're a slave to Christ. You have a new master and that master calls you to deny yourself.

to repent. You do not become a Christian to be free of your sins or the consequences of your sins.

You come to Christ to become a slave to Christ. You see, God's gospel, the gospel, points us to salvation. Salvation is not simply our sins are forgiven.

[43 : 53] Listen, that's a great thing. we don't have to live in any guilt or shame knowing that our sins are forgiven. Salvation is not simply that I'm going to heaven. That is a great and wonderful thing.

The greatest thing about the gospel, in my opinion, is that God presently sees me as he sees his son, Jesus Christ. that moment of salvation, God makes me one of his.

I am adopted into the family of God. I am not a stranger. I am not an outcast. I get to be a child of the king and he knows me.

Not because I was smart, not because I had the right philosophy, or I was so lovable. Ephesians simply states it's because God's love is so great that he could love someone like me.

In the me before, I was an enemy of God. But now I'm a child of God. fact is Jesus died for me because I needed him to.

[45 : 23] You see, this is the message that created the Protestant church. We're coming up on Reformation Day on October 31st when Martin Luther, reading this great book of Romans, understood that he was thinking that the righteousness of God meant he was going to be judged and he was under emotional turmoil every single day.

Then he finally understood it wasn't God's righteousness, but God was placing his righteousness for us. That it was our righteousness that didn't make us right with God.

It was the righteousness of Jesus Christ. That same righteousness that was offered to Martin Luther is offered here for you this day.

The righteousness of Jesus he gives you freely in faith if you simply believe. Let me ask you a question.

Perhaps you are here and you think yourself a great person who does great things. You can't think of a single person you've ever offended, least of all God.

[46 : 44] How do I know I'm not right with God? Well the simple question is whose glory do you live for? If you live for any other glory than God, God, you are separated in rebellion against God.

And the way to salvation, this God's gospel is simply recognizing that you are who God says you are. A sinner who is separated from God. And because of God's great love he sent his only begotten son to die in your place.

That Jesus Christ lived a life you could not live and he died a death you could not die. That on the third day he rose again conquering from sin.

And that true understanding of your faith leads you to want to confess and repent of your sins because you want to be right before God. So my friends, if you are drawn to do so, then you are experiencing the most powerful being that exists in the universe this day.

It's the power of the Holy Spirit that works in your heart that is drawing you to God. Do them.

[48 : 09] Confess. Repent. Believe. And call on the name of Jesus and you will be saved. And I will tell you on this day, this Thanksgiving weekend, there will be no greater thing to be thankful for than the gospel of Jesus Christ.

God's gospel. Let's pray. Dear Lord, Heavenly Father, we just thank you for this man, Paul, that you called to be an apostle 2,000 years ago who simply says, I am not ashamed.

And in that power of the spirit as he wrote that, he knew what we would face. He knew our temptations. He knew we'd be scared. He'd know we didn't want to offend.

We didn't want to separate ourselves from friends or family or coworkers. But he also teaches that if we do not present God's gospel, then we are not presenting a saving gospel.

Father, we also recognize that you call us to be wise. In fact, Jesus Christ simply states, be innocent as doves, but wise as serpents in how you present the gospel.

[49 : 20] In fact, the other apostles were afraid of Paul. They didn't want to share the gospel because they believed he would kill them for it. Father, you don't call us to be foolish.

You call us to be wise. Father, let us pray for the hearts that we desire to call to you, to give them this truth, this loving truth that they are lost unless they find you.

and the reality is it's God calling them. So, Father, in this thanksgiving, I pray that you'd grant us here at SBC a not only a true love for gospel, but a understanding of the gospel so that we can say, as Paul said, not only are we not ashamed of the gospel, but we glory in the gospel.

for in it is the power of God's righteousness to save. And God's people said, Amen.