

LESSON 6

JULY 11, 2021

UNIT II. FAITH AND SALVATION A GIFT TO STRENGTHEN YOU

DEVOTIONAL READING: Psalm 71:1-6, 17-24

BACKGROUND SCRIPTURE: Romans 1

PRINT PASSAGE: Romans 1:8-17

KEY VERSE

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. (Romans 1:16, KJV)

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I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the power of God that brings salvation to everyone who believes: first to the Jew, then to the Gentile. (Romans 1:16, NIV)

LESSON AIMS

As a result of experiencing this lesson, you should be able to do these things:

- Discern the power of God as illustrated in Paul's faith.
- Affirm the power of God's salvation in family and friends.
- Pray for the salvation of the world, believing that it is possible.

KEY TERMS

Faith (verse 8)—Greek: *pistis* (pis'-tis): faithfulness; belief or trust.

Gospel (verse 9)—Greek: *euangelion* (yoo-ang-ghel'-ee-on): the Good News of the coming of the Messiah; good tidings.

Prayers (verse 9 [KJV]/verse 10 [NIV])—Greek: *proseuché* (pros-yoo-khay'): requests; entreaties; pleas.

Serve (verse 9)—Greek: *latreuó* (lat-ryoo'-o): to serve, especially God (perhaps simply: "I worship").

Thank (verse 8)—Greek: *eucharisteó* (yoo-khar-is-teh'-o): to be thankful; to give thanks, express gratitude.

Witness (verse 9)—Greek: *martus* (mar'-toos): a record; an eyewitness or ear-witness.

PREPARING THE LESSON

- Refer to the *Townsend Press SS Commentary Teacher's Edition* for an additional lesson plan—with word studies, insights on teaching adults, learner matrices, etc.
- Review last week's student assignments ("Your Life" and Your World!").
- Thoroughly review your student book for your adult or young adult class.
- Please note that you have the option of using your subscription bundle supplements, i.e., Lesson Scenario, Student Activity Sheet, SSL-AAG

WHY THIS LESSON MATTERS

People often look for relationships that provide them with strength and stability. Where do you find your strength? The Gospel is the power of God to save everyone who believes.

THE LESSON IN FOCUS

Personal experiences contribute to the development of many types of relationships over the span of a lifetime. We develop relationships in different seasons, at different stages, and under different circumstances. Some relationships are superficial while others are significant and deep. Some survive and thrive across considerable physical distances, while others crumble and fail despite close proximity. Strong relationships require maintenance and effort by all its participants. In today's technological age, we can remain connected with friends and loved ones through e-mail, instant messages, or social media. Through such interactions we share our thoughts and the details of our lives with others, including those with whom we are superficially connected. Relationships are based on a point of intersection or commonality—a shared faith, experience, belief, or heritage. We forfeit special blessings when we neglect to open ourselves to others and share the benefit of our experiences—spiritual and otherwise. God created us social beings to live in community with others. Our lives are greatly enriched when we maximize opportunities for mutual sharing with others.

THE LESSON IN CONTEXT

This unit addresses “faith and salvation.” The first lesson addresses the power of the Gospel to strengthen us. Paul teaches elsewhere in this epistle that the blessings of the Messiah were intended for the Gentiles as well as the Jews (see Romans 3:29-30; 9:24, 30; etc.). This could be the summation of Paul's epistle to the Roman church. The apostle had hoped to eventually preach in Spain (see Romans 15:22-29). To do this, Paul needed the support of the Roman church. He was eager to minister among them so that they might bless each other in their common work of the Gospel. The Romans did not just believe the Gospel and live it; their faith was so strong that they had gained a good reputation for it. Paul was gratified by the Roman believers' good name and example of faith to other believers. Paul's commission to spread the Gospel was not confined to a single nation or group of people. He willingly and boldly preached to all nations, and to Jews and Gentiles alike. The statement “To the Jew first, and also to the Greek” (verse 16) emphasizes that the Gospel was first to be announced to the Jews and then to the Gentiles, whom Paul refers to here as Greeks (see Luke 24:47; Acts 1:8). The apostles observed a pattern of priority in their ministry (see Acts 13:46). In verse 11, Paul references Habakkuk 2:4 (“the just shall live by faith”). God demonstrated an unwavering faithfulness to His covenant with Israel in spite of the nation's sin, even to the point of giving them the first opportunity to receive the Gospel. God worked in the hearts of people of faith to reveal His righteousness (or justice) to the world. This reading also sheds light on the difficult phrase “through faith for faith” (verse 17—literally, out of faith toward faith).

OPENING INQUIRY (Choose from the questions below.)

1. Do you enjoy receiving unexpected gifts?
2. How does it make you feel?
3. How does you feel when someone offers a gift that is not given freely but tied to some set of conditions?

INSIGHTS

As Christians, we boldly believe that the Gospel is for everyone and that every believer has a responsibility to help share the Gospel, according to the Great Commission (see Matthew 28:19-20). Most believers do not hesitate to give God their prayer petitions. They approach God

with earnest expectation, presenting Him with a list of the particular things they desire, believing that He will oblige and deliver every request. God is not a cosmic gift machine, obligated to produce whatever we ask, on demand. He has the final word based on His plan, design, and timing. Part of our spiritual journey toward maturity includes nurturing godly connections and relationships that inspire us to live faithfully and fulfill the calling of Christ in our lives. Our faith grows as we witness firsthand what God is doing in the lives of others.

EXPLORATION

We must grow to not be secretive or ashamed of our faith in Jesus Christ. Exposure to those who do not share our beliefs and new government rules may leave us hesitant to celebrate our faith and declare what we believe, but we must remain bold (and wise). The more we study God's Word, the better we recognize that faithful obedience to Christ calls us to action, not just profession alone. As we strive to do the work of the Lord, we must seek the company and companionship of other believers. Christian companionship helps us to gain comfort and strength for the Christian journey.

ADDITIONAL EXPOSITORY INSIGHTS FOR THE TEACHER

Commentary on *Romans 1:8-10*

KJV

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.

NIV

8 First, I *thank* my God through Jesus Christ for all of you, because your *faith* is being reported all over the world.

9 God, whom I serve in my spirit in preaching the *gospel* of his Son, is my witness how constantly I remember you

10 in my *prayers* at all times; and I pray that now at last by God's will the way may be opened for me to come to you.

One of the hallmarks of the Pauline Epistles are his expressions of thanksgivings at the beginning of most writings. This pattern of acknowledging others and offering gratitude to God is evidence of Paul's closeness to God and cheerful outlook. He often used the phrase "to give thanks" (see Romans 1:8; 1 Corinthians 1:4; Ephesians 1:16; Colossians 1:3; 1 Thessalonians 1:2; 2 Thessalonians 1:3; Philemon 4), rendered in Greek as *eucharisteo* or *charin* echo and literally meaning "to be grateful or thankful" (see 1 Timothy 1:12; 2 Timothy 1:3). Note that thanks and petitions are offered to God through Jesus Christ. Paul did not neglect to identify the person(s) who were the object of his gratitude. In verse 9, Paul stresses the inward aspect of service. God alone knows the inward workings of man and was the only one who could credibly testify to the purity of Paul's motive for sharing the Good News with the Romans. Not only does Paul mention

the Romans frequently in his prayers, but he also always prayed and wrote about coming to them. Paul earnestly prayed for God's will in his life and ministry. In the case of Rome, he was not certain whether it was God's will for him to go to visit. In that God had not said no, Paul continued to pray and press toward Rome. His affection for the Roman believers is apparent in his warm words of encouragement to them. Paul understood the power of mutuality: as saints share together, they build one another up, encouraging one another along the journey of faith.

DISCUSSION STARTERS

(Please review the appropriate student book's related biblical exposition section.)

- **Adult Question:**
Do you make a habit of letting others know when you are praying for them?
- **Young Adult Question:**
The Roman Christians had a contagious faith. Do you think today's Christians have that type of faith? Explain.

Commentary on *Romans 1:11-13*

KJV

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 hitherto,) that I might have some fruit among you also, even as among other Gentiles.

NIV

11 I long to see you so that I may impart to you some spiritual gift to make you strong—

12 that is, that you and I may be mutually encouraged by each other's faith.

13 I do not want you to be unaware, brothers and sisters, that I planned many times to come to you (but have been prevented from doing so until now) in order that I might have a harvest among you, just as I have had among the other Gentiles.

Paul desired to impart a spiritual gift upon the Romans to strengthen their faith and work for the Lord. This was not some special spiritual gift, as in Romans 12:6-8, but the growing knowledge of various truths about God that would strengthen their Christian living and service. Paul knew he (and his readers) would be encouraged and comforted by an opportunity to visit together. Even the great evangelist, so full of the power of the Holy Ghost, says plainly that he needed the encouragement that comes from Christian fellowship. Observe how the pronouns make this faith personal: "your faith and mine" (verse 12). The last phrase in verse 13 should be tied to the verb purposed. When connected, it would read "I purposed to come in order that I might have fruit among you" or "produce fruit among you." The readers in Rome were Gentiles, and Paul hoped to have the same results from ministering to them as he had had with other Gentiles he had visited. He believed by faith that God would produce a fruitful and productive harvest in Rome.

DISCUSSION STARTERS

(Please review the appropriate student book's related biblical exposition section.)

- **Adult Questions:**

Have you ever felt hindered in your desire or efforts to make a spiritual connection with someone who needs God? Did you give up, persevere, or wait for God to open a door?

- **Young Adult Question:**

For many people, the focus of Christianity is receiving a personal blessing. What do you think Paul would say to this? Explain.

Commentary on (*Romans 1:14-17*)

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.

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

NIV

14 I am obligated both to Greeks and non-Greeks, both to the wise and the foolish.

15 That is why I am so eager to preach the gospel also to you who are in Rome.

16 For I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the power of God that brings salvation to everyone who believes: first to the Jew, then to the Gentile.

17 For in the gospel the righteousness of God is revealed—a righteousness that is by faith from first to last, just as it is written: “The righteous will live by faith.”

In verse 14, Paul names the full gamut of the people of Roman—Greeks, Barbarians (non-geeks), wise, and foolish, as well as the upper, middle, and lower classes. These are the ones to whom Paul felt compelled to preach the Gospel with urgency. The message of the Gospel is dynamic and relevant for every person, from every background or life experience. Paul was not ashamed of the Gospel, as he understood that an individual is saved when his/her whole being responds to the Gospel with complete trust and belief. The Greek word for “belief” is *pisteuo*, which, in context of the text, carries not only the weight of believing in the Gospel but also total trust and commitment to the extent of turning one’s self over to the Gospel. Although belief does not involve a response, it requires a non-straying commitment that relies wholeheartedly on Jesus Christ. In the Gospel, we find the righteousness of God is revealed unto us as He produces righteousness within us. Paul stressed that righteousness is from faith. The righteousness, which God brings into being, is delivered and bestowed upon the Christian only because of faith. As the believer becomes increasingly aware of all that God’s righteousness signifies, he must still fully commit himself if he is to receive the righteousness of God. Paul placed faith first in his delivery, emphasizing it to show that faith is essential for a person to be just. The Greek word for “just” is *dikaios*, which can also be translated as “upright” or “righteous.” Faith plays a central role in every effort to live justly before God. We must remain truthful to God’s Word by faith, never straying and always trusting.

DISCUSSION STARTERS

(Please review the appropriate student book’s related biblical exposition section.)

- **Adult Questions:**

What does it mean to be “ashamed of the gospel” (verse 16)? With whom (which groups or types of people) are you more comfortable sharing your faith?

- **Young Adult Question:**

Many Christians are ashamed of the Gospel today. In what ways do they demonstrate their shame? What is the impact of their attitude on unbelievers?

LIFE APPLICATION

Refer to Adult Book

(See student lesson’s “Your Life” section.)

— This week, thank God daily for His saving grace and pray for a greater burden for lost souls and a renewed passion for sharing the Good News with others.

(See student lesson’s “Your World!” section.)

— This week, instead of complaining about a community, national, or world concern, commit the matter to God and ask Him to show you how you can make a difference.

Refer to Young Adult Book

(See student lesson’s “Your Life” section.)

— Paul’s letter to the Romans is a gift to us to strengthen us in all matters of faith. As you commit to mutually encouraging others in the faith, ask the Holy Spirit to empower you daily to live righteously, and pray for the salvation of the world, believing that it is possible.

(See student lesson’s “Your World!” section.)

— Sin flourishes in this world, but God still commands that you live righteously. Paul communicated this when he said it was the Gospel of Jesus that transformed his life. The world still needs to hear the Gospel. Affirm the power of God’s salvation in family and friends by sharing it.

NEXT WEEK’S LESSON

The lesson topic for Sunday, July 18, 2021, is “Seeking Assurance.” The Devotional Reading is Genesis 15:1-6, the Background Scripture is Romans 4, and the Printed Text is Romans 4:1-12.

CLOSING PRAYER

Lord, help us to stand in the strength of the salvation we received in Christ Jesus. You have prepared us and equipped us by Your Spirit to do great work. Lead us into Your will. In Jesus’ name, we pray. Amen.

HOME DAILY BIBLE READINGS

The Faith of Abraham

(July 12-18, 2021)

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| MONDAY, July 12: | “God’s Covenant with Abraham” | (Genesis 15:1-8) |
| TUESDAY, July 13: | “All World’s Families Blessed Through Abraham” | (Genesis 12:1-9) |
| WEDNESDAY, July 14: | “Promise Realized by Faith Not Law” | (Romans 4:13-15) |
| THURSDAY, July 15: | “For All Who Share Abraham’s Faith” | (Romans 4:16-18) |
| FRIDAY, July 16: | “Abraham Believed Despite Impossible Odds” | (Romans 4:19-21) |
| SATURDAY, July 17: | “In Christ, Believers Share Abraham’s Faith” | (Romans 4:22-25) |
| SUNDAY, July 18: | “Abraham, Father of the Faithful” | (Romans 4:1-12) |