

I Am Not Ashamed

I want to preach to you from my favorite verse of scripture which is Romans 1:16.

“For I am not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ, because it is the power of God for the salvation of everyone who believes: first the Jew, then the Gentile.”

Good people are not ashamed of things or names of great worth and importance. As Americans, we are not ashamed of such names as George Washington, Abraham Lincoln, Thomas Jefferson, James Garfield, General Douglas MacArthur, or other great giants who have helped to build on this continent a nation under God that respects and defends the individual rights of all mankind. These names will always occupy a sacred place of honor in our hearts.

We take pride in telling people of this world that Abe Lincoln was a log splitter and he became the President of the United States. We like to tell how he studied by an open fire at night from borrowed books so that he could get what he called book learning. We like to tell how he was a proprietor of a one room general store over there in Illinois. We all know that if

Abe lived today that he would be called ignorant and hillbilly by the so-called philosophers who are intellectual without being intelligent.

No nation under the living sun could be any prouder of a national leader than we Americans are of Abraham Lincoln. Listen to the words of this beloved statement as he delivered his second inaugural address on March 4, 1865. "With malice towards none, with charity for all, with firmness in the right, as God gives us to see the right, let us strive on to finish the work we are in. To bind up the nation's wounds, to care for him who shall have borne the battle and for his widow and his orphan, to do all that may achieve and cherish a just and lasting peace among ourselves and with all nations." This is Abraham Lincoln and he represents the kind of men that have built this beloved United States that we claim as ours. True Americans are not ashamed of men like Abe Lincoln and other giants who have braved the path of Christian brotherhood and Christian government. Is there one among us right now who is ashamed of any of these? If so, you should hide your face in shame. For we who have studied the pages of our history and have wept for every drop of blood shed for this American dream realize that these men deserve the honor and credit of centuries to come and still their greatness would be untold.

James Russell Lowell has said these words, "Our country has a gospel of her own to preach and practice before all the world. The freedom of man, the glorious claims of human brotherhood, and the souls loyalty to none but God."

Traveling all over the world these past 23 years has really made me appreciate my home, the United States of America. It is wonderful to be an American, but it is far greater to be a Christian. "I am not ashamed of the Gospel," Paul said. I know that none of us are ashamed to be an American, but it is even a greater privilege to be a Christian and to be able to say, "I am not ashamed of the gospel of Jesus Christ." I believe that it was with this same kind of pride that the Apostle Paul took

pen and paper in hand wrote these words to the Christians in Rome, "I am a debtor both to the Greeks and to the Barbarians, both to the wise and unwise, so as much as in me is I am ready to preach the Gospel to you there in Rome also. For I am not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God unto Salvation."

I. I want to speak first of all about the power of the Gospel.

The Gospel is the power of God unto salvation. Today we are living in an age of tremendous power. I think that all of us were tremendously impressed when the doctor in South Africa first succeeded in transplanting a heart. Dr Christian Barnard, is the name of the surgeon who performed that first transplant on a Dr Blaiberg. It was a wonderful thing; Dr Blaiberg was able to receive a dead person's heart and live on that heart and go back to the normal pursuits of life, playing tennis, swimming, and everything else. I think he lived about 18 months longer than what he would have otherwise. Since that time many others have received heart transplants. Just recently Dr. Christian Barnard succeeded his second experiment as he put an extra heart into the chest cavity of someone, and now I read this person is walking around enjoying life on two hearts, the old heart which was damaged and the borrowed heart which he got from someone else. This is a great thing that we are succeeding in the field of Medical Science, and it shows us the power doctors have. They say in time there will be a spare parts bank. If you wear out your left leg, you'll be able to go to this bank and borrow somebody else's. If you wear out your left lung, you'll be able to go to the spare parts bank and get somebody else's lung. I have no doubt that the doctors will continue working until they succeed in doing this. It is the sign of the age of power in which we are living.

The Jet

This is the age of power as far as transportation is con-

cerned. It is the age of the jet airplane.

Now, back at the turn of the century, the skeptics all shook their heads and they predicted "they" would never get "it" off the ground. "They" were Wilbur and Orville Wright, and "it" was a huge, crude contraption, with a twelve horse power engine, but they did get it off the ground. Orville made the world's first controlled flight, in a heavier than air machine, on December 17, 1903. The flight lasted just twelve seconds and covered the distance of 120 feet at Kittyhawk, North Carolina. But it opened a vast new dimension in man's conquest of time and space.

The Jumbo

Not so long ago, some were saying again, "They will never get it off the ground." This time "they" were the Boeing Company and "it" was a giant jet liner, designed to carry more passengers, up to 500, faster, further and higher than any of the predecessors. Once again the skeptics were confounded. The 747 jumbo jet did fly, and went into commercial service in January of 1970. By the end of that year the Boeing Company delivered more than 90 of the giant jets to 30 US and foreign airlines at a price tag of \$25,000,000 each. Since that time, on a number of occasions, I've been privileged to fly in one of these giant jetliners which is called the Jumbo Jet, the 747. And I guarantee you that it is more comfortable than sitting in a church pew. It's even more comfortable than sitting in your living room chair with your feet propped up, watching TV at home. It is an amazing concept in transportation; another sign of the age of power in which we live.

But my friend, I am so glad to proclaim the Gospel of Jesus Christ because it is the power of God unto salvation, and the Gospel has more power than the 747, and the Gospel has more power than the rocket that took man to the moon back in July 1969.

The Moon

Now that's another amazing thing and demonstrates the age of power; to think that we have been able to send man to the moon, and they have walked on the moon, taken pictures of it, and then brought them back to earth again because of the power of the rocket.

Now I understand they are saying that they are going to build a glass city on the moon. Inside the glass city they are going to grow plants, the plants will produce oxygen, it will be possible to live on the moon the year around. So they are already beginning to plan rocket passengerships to and from the moon, because people are going to be traveling there quite regularly. One airline has already sold out the entire first class section of the first passenger rocket to the moon at \$10,000 per ticket! People are that anxious to go.

The Church on the Moon

Well, I got to thinking if we are going to have people on the moon, then we need the church on the moon, that means they are going to need a preacher, so I'm getting ready to go. Anybody want to go with me? It sounds ridiculous, but if we make the strides in transportation in the next few years that we have since Lindbergh flew the Atlantic in 1927, I have no doubt that all this will come to pass. But the Gospel is even more powerful than those rockets that fly to and from the moon and the rockets that they are planning to take to the moon in the future.

I am not ashamed of the power of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. The Gospel has the power to provide the best in this life and the best in the life which is to come. I am not ashamed that the Gospel has the power to take any sinner and change that sinner totally and completely.

An Idol

I want to tell you about one village in India where I had the privilege of preaching the Gospel; two times I worked with Bernie Getter, while we have been in India. He and his dear wife Jo Ann, and their children are a blessing to everybody. While I was with Bernie Getter we were going to this one village to hold evangelistic meetings, and he told me this story about how he was able to start the church in this village. It was an idolworshipping village. I'm sure you know the people of India, for the most part, are idolworshipping people. Most of them are Hindu. They do bow down to the idols, and it is heart breaking to see them going to the Hindu temples and bowing down to gods that cannot hear, gods that cannot answer prayer, gods that cannot speak, gods that cannot help in anyway. What a blessed privilege it is for Christians to go over to India and tell them about the one true God who lives, who can hear our prayers, who answers our prayers, and helps us each and every day.

Well, Brother Getter went to this particular village to preach the gospel. He took an Indian evangelist with him to this village and the Indian evangelist also preached the Gospel. They worked in this village for a long time, and finally there were a few that gave their lives to Jesus, but Brother Getter did not have the funds to leave an Indian evangelist in that village to help teach these people and to help them to grow in Christ. All he could do was leave the Bible and leave them on their own.

Brother Getter returned to that village a year later, and the first thing he saw on entering the village was a grotesque idol that had been set up at the center of the village. He was terribly upset as was the Indian evangelist. All the Christians came out and joyfully received them, but, of course, Brother Getter and the Indian evangelist were troubled and the Christians could see there was something wrong. They said, "Let's have a church service, you are finally here and can tell us God's word." Brother Getter said, "What is that that I see at the center of the

village?" The people said, "Oh, it's nothing." Brother Getter said, "Don't tell me it's nothing, I can see it's an idol. You have turned back to idol worship." The people were so remorseful and they began to weep. They said, "We are sorry. We didn't have anyone to teach us, we didn't have any one to preach to us, there was no one to encourage us. We are terribly sorry we did it."

The Indian evangelist rushed to the center of the village and grabbed that idol and jerked it down, he broke it, he stomped on it, and ground it in the dust. He shouted to the people and said, "You all are nothing but a bunch of backsliders, we will have nothing to do with you, you turned away from the one true God." The people fell on their faces before Brother Getter and they wept and they said, "Please pray for us. Ask God to forgive us. We will never again do a terrible thing like this, if God will just forgive us." So the Indian evangelist had prayer with the people, and again they left these people alone with nothing but the Word of God. There was no trained preacher in the village to follow up the work, to encourage them, to teach them, they just had the Bible to read themselves.

The thrilling part of that story is, today in Orissa State, the church in that village is the strongest in all the state of Orissa. And strictly by the power of God. The power of God's word is all these people had. They didn't have a missionary, they didn't have an Indian evangelist, they just had the Bible. Just by studying the Bible on their own, they became very strong, steadfast Christians. When we arrived in that village we had the biggest reception, the biggest parade, the most joyful time of all of our evangelistic meetings.

As the Bible was powerful enough to change those idol worshipping people in that village to true, dedicated, sincere Christians, I know the Gospel has the power to change your life and my life and the life of any other sinner totally and completely. I've seen it and I know you have seen it, the Gospel changing alcoholics, drug addicts, adulterers, adultresses. I have seen the

Gospel change the worst of sinners, and make them gloriously happy servants of God. Maybe some of you here in the audience are defeated by the power of the devil and the power of sin. Maybe you are saying, "I would love to be a Christian, but I cannot do it. I have tried, but failed. Maybe you've been trying in your own strength. Try depending on God's power instead of your own power. God's power is the same today as it's always been. It is the same as when Paul said, "I am not ashamed of the power of the Gospel."

II. In the second place, I want to talk about the promises of the Gospel. I am not ashamed of the promises of the Gospel. I am glad to say that the promises of the Gospel are for everyone. Jesus said in John 6:37, "Him that cometh to me, I will in no wise cast him out." That includes the rich and the poor, good and bad, the high or the lowly, the educated or the uneducated. Revelation 22:17 says, "Whosoever will come." Remember that Jesus did not come into this world to improve society by reforming it, He came into the world to redeem society by saving it. Won't you listen to His great invitation from Matthew 11, "Come unto me all ye that labor and are heavy laden and I will give you rest." I don't know who is not heavy laden. Everybody in the world, it seems, is facing terrible trials and problems.

Troubles

I was standing on a busy street corner of Georgetown, Guyana down in South America. I had gone there to establish a Church of Christ in that city where there was no congregation. A young man noticing that I was a foreigner, came up and began to talk to me and when he learned who I was and what I was doing, he began to pour out his troubles. And that young man ended his remarks by saying, "I have a notion to go out and get a gun and put it to my brain and just blow my head off, because I've got so many troubles."

In India, it was the time of examination for many of the Indian school children. The people of India greatly prize education! They want an education if there is any possible way of getting one. They put such great importance to education. Examination time means everything to them. More than a few Indian students came to me and said, "Please pray for me, because if I fail my exam, I am going to commit suicide." Every place you go, people have problems and people have troubles. But people who have come to Jesus have found that there is a way that you can bury your problems, and that is to cast your troubles and problems upon the Lord. Isn't that a wonderful promise that we have. We can do that. God is willing to bear our problems and troubles. And we'll have the faith to put them upon God, then they become God's problems and God's troubles and not ours.

Let us think specifically about the exceeding great and precious promises of the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

A. First of all, there is the promise that God will forgive all our sins. How many times have you thought, "Oh, I wish that I can live my life all over again." No doubt you were burdened when you said that. You had problems, you were thinking about your mistakes, your sins, and you were thinking, "Oh, if I could live my life again, I wouldn't make this mistake, I wouldn't make that mistake, I will do things much differently." Then you said, "What's the use, nobody can live their life over again. That's foolish thinking." With God nothing is impossible and as a matter of fact God is concerned you must live your life over again. Because Jesus said, "Ye must be born again and except the man be born of the water and the spirit, ye cannot enter the kingdom of God." Now how is this possible? Well, Peter gave the answer on the Day of Pentecost, when he spoke to the murderers of Jesus. In Acts 2:38, he told them, "Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ, for the remission of sins and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit." Ananias told Saul of Tarsus the answer when told in

Acts 22:16, “Now why tarriest thou, arise and be baptized and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord.” If you want to start your life all over again, you can do it by trusting Jesus and obeying His commands. If you put your faith in Him and repent of your sins and obey Him in the waters of Christian baptism, Jesus promises to wash away all of your sins and give you a brand new life to live for Him. That’s the first promise of the Gospel.

B. The promises of the Spirit. Some of you may be saying, “Well, I believe that, but I’m worried about what happens after baptism. I’m afraid that if I accepted Jesus and was baptized and was forgiven, that I wouldn’t be able to live a Christian life. I’m afraid I would backslide and I don’t want to disappoint myself, I don’t want to disappoint others, and I don’t want to disappoint God. So I want to wait until I’m absolutely sure I can live a Christian life. When I’m sure, then I’ll become a Christian.” My friend, you’ll never be sure until the day you die, so if that’s what you are waiting on, you’ll die unsaved. As a matter of fact, none of us is able to live a Christian life by himself in his own power and strength. The devil is stronger than you and the devil is stronger than me, and the devil is a roaring lion, walking about seeking whom he may devour. He is always ready to tempt us in every turn and every corner and at every opportunity, but you see God will give you His Holy Spirit, if you will be born again. Through the power of God’s Holy Spirit, you will be able to live a Christian life. Not because you can do it, but because God can do it, through you, giving you the strength and guidance, the peace and comfort that you need that is so necessary. God’s Holy Spirit does guide, does lead us, He even prays for us when we know not how to pray as we should. So again, I want to repeat what Peter said to the murderers of Jesus on the Day of Pentecost, “Repent, be baptized everyone of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.”

The second promise of the Gospel is the gift of the Holy

Spirit. The Holy Spirit, who comes into our lives, not only as a comforter, but as a guide, as a helper to give us the added power and strength that we need to overcome the devil's temptations, so that we may live for Christ.

C. Heaven. There is a third promise of the Gospel of Jesus Christ and that is a home in Heaven. All of us love our homes, but there are things that ruin everything in the home, such as hunger, pain, sorrow, death, sometimes a terrible illness. Won't it be wonderful when we get to our Heavenly home, we won't have any of that. There will be no hunger in Heaven. No sorrow in Heaven. No death in Heaven. No separation in Heaven. We will get to be with our God and our Savior Jesus for ever and ever and ever.

The first time I went to India, I worked with Bernie and Jo Ann Getter, and this was right after their oldest son had been killed in a train accident, it was a terrible thing. We got there after the accident, after the death, after the funeral. It was a terrible time of sadness in the lives of the Getters, but they went right on with evangelistic meetings and carried on. It was really a heart touching thing to them and to others who observed, to see the unbelieving Hindus pouring in to extend their sympathy to the Getters. They had been in India for twenty-five years. During those twenty-five years, Brother Getter had been arrested 13 times with criminal charges filed against him by the unbelieving Hindus. Thirteen times he has been acquitted in court. Once he was poisoned by the unbelieving Hindus. So, you can imagine how wonderful it was for the Getters after all those years to have some of those Hindu people come to extend their sympathy, at the time of death of their oldest son, Kenneth.

There was one Hindu couple that came to the house and they wept and they wept and finally the Hindu wife said, "Oh, I don't know how you people can stand it, just to think the star of your family has been snatched away in the hour of his manhood. How can you stand it?" Of course, you need to

understand a little bit of Hindu culture to know just how they would feel about this. Indians pen all of their hope in the oldest son. Everything revolves around the oldest son. To lose the oldest son is an unspeakable tragedy as far as they are concerned. So you can imagine why they said this. Mrs Getter spoke up and said, "It's very hard and we are real sorrowful because we miss Kenneth, but we can stand it because we have hope." Then she went ahead to explain the Christian hope, "You see, Jesus our Savior also died and was buried, but He arose from the dead. He lives and because He lives, we know that we shall also live. We know that Kenneth lives. We know that Jesus has taken Kenneth to Heaven and we know someday we are going to rise from the dead, and we are going to be reunited with our son in Heaven and we will get to be with him for all eternity. That's our hope as Christians and that's why we can stand it." The Hindu man and woman looked at Mr and Mrs Getter and said, "Oh, we do wish that our religion would give us a little bit of hope."

Now Hindus believe such a variety of things, it's hard to say what they believe, but some of the Hindus I have talked to believe they are going to be reincarnated and come back as a cow if they were very good Hindu. Most of them fear that if they don't live up to their Hindu religion, they will come back as a donkey or as a pig, and that's the worst of all to come back as a pig, because pigs are so dirty. What kind of hope is that? Can you imagine what life would be like if you didn't have any more hope than that? Oh, how we thank God for the promises that are ours through the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

III. I am not ashamed of the power of the Gospel; I am not ashamed of the promises of the Gospel; and then I want to say in the third place, I am not ashamed of the price that has been paid for the Gospel.

Now the price of anything usually has a lot to do with what it's worth. In these days of inflation, everybody is price conscious and we are all looking for a bargain price. My friends, the

Gospel of Jesus Christ was not purchased at any bargain. The price paid for the Gospel was the greatest price ever paid for anything in the whole history of the world. The price paid was the blood of Jesus Christ. That's why I say I'm not ashamed of the price, I am only ashamed of my own unworthiness and of the many times I have lost precious opportunities to tell others of the price that has been paid. Thinking of the price paid for the Gospel and then of course, the price that we must pay to be a follower of Jesus.

I want to give you one more illustration from our campaigns in India. One time when we were there, we worked with Art Morris in South India. We worked in the Erode area. Erode is a very large city in South India, then there are many, many villages in a radius around Erode. There are also some forbidding mountains around Erode.

When Arthur Morris first went to the Erode area he selected this one particular village where he wanted to try and establish the Church of Christ, the people were terribly hostile. They wouldn't give him anything to eat, not even a cup of water, but he kept going back preaching and teaching God's word. Finally the day came when the people warmed up a little bit, they would give him a cup of water to drink, and then finally they even gave him some food to eat.

Eventually there were three teen age boys who yielded their lives to Lord Jesus. But after Brother Morris baptized these boys into Christ, they said, "You'll have to go home with us." When he asked why, the boys said, "Because we are afraid our father will kill us." That is not uncommon in India. I have seen with my own eyes, a new Christian getting beaten up by an unruly mob of Hindu people following a baptismal service. It is not at all uncommon for a Christian to be persecuted publicly, to be kicked out of the family. If they become a Christian in India, they pay a high price. So Brother Morris knew what the boys meant when they said, "we are afraid our father will kill us," and so he agreed to go home with them to tell the parents.

When he told the parents what the boys had done, they flew into a rage, and the father demanded the three boys deny Jesus, but they would not, they said, "We believe that He is the son of God and our Savior." The father was in such a terrible rage, he kicked them out of the family and he ordered them to go to the mountains and stay there for ninety days.

I am told that people cannot live in the mountains near Erode, because there is no food, there is nothing but wild animals. It's absolutely impossible. When the father said go to the mountains and stay ninety days, it was the same as us saying, "Go to the electric chair. Go to the gallows." It was like a sentence of death being pronounced.

Arthur Morris thought surely that the boys would deny Jesus when the father said that, but the three boys said, "Alright, if that's what we must do, we'll go to the mountains, but we won't deny Jesus." Art Morris said to the boys, "We will pray for you. With God nothing is impossible. God can save you, not only take you to Heaven, but save you here on earth, and we will pray for God to deliver you from this terrible fate." They had prayer and the boys left in obedience to their father and went to the mountains.

Brother Morris went back to Madrapakkam and organized the Christians and they conducted a 24-hour prayer meeting, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. For 90 days at least one person was praying day and night. Praying to God on behalf of those three young Christians, that God would deliver them from what seemed a certain death.

On the 91st morning, Brother Morris went back to that village and sat down. Some of the people came and greeted him and asked him why he had come. He said, "I come to greet the boys back from the mountain." They laughed at him and said the boys were dead. Brother Morris said, "No, they are alive. God has heard our prayers." They laughed at him. He said, "We'll wait and see." He sat there and waited all morning long. Brother Morris told me, privately, "I was about like that man in

the Bible. 'Lord, I believe, but help thou mine unbelief.' " He said, "I sat there and finally it was afternoon and word spread through the village. Every once in a while someone would come by and laugh at me."

About three o'clock in the afternoon here came the three boys walking into the village. Brother Morris said, "Oh boys, how did you live through these 90 days?" The three boys looked at him like he was crazy. "Why God answered your prayers. How do you think we lived?" Brother Morris was so ashamed of himself and he said, "I know God answered our prayers, boys, but I want to know how God answered our prayers?" They said, "When we got up to the mountain, we thought surely we would die, but right away God showed us that if we would build a house in the trees, that would keep us safe from the animals. So we built a little platform up in the trees and we would sleep there in the night time and that kept us safe. God showed us some food. We found some roots we could chew on. We even found some coconut, we were able to eat the meat and drink the milk out of the coconut, that gave us liquid in place of water. God answered your prayers every day and brought us back alive."

Think of the price those boys paid for becoming Christians. But now I want you to think of the reward that came to those three boys. Because those three teen age boys had the courage to not only accept Christ, but to live for Christ, lay their lives on the line and be willing to die for Christ if necessary, those three boys lived to see the Church of Christ established in that village. They lived to see their parents, who put them through that ordeal, baptized into Christ. They lived to see a strong Church of Christ established in that village, in fact in that village we had our biggest campaign, all because three teen age, Indian boys were willing to pay the price for Jesus, because they appreciated so much how Jesus paid the greatest price of all for them.

It was Stuttard Kennedy who wrote these lines:

When Jesus came to Golgotha, they hanged Him on a tree. They

MY FAVORITE REVIVAL SERMONS

drove great nails through His hands and feet. They made it Calvary. They crowned Him with a crown of thorns, red with wounds and deep. For those were crude and cruel days and human flesh was cheap. But when Jesus came to Niles, Michigan, some of you just passed Him by. You wouldn't harm a hair on His head, just let Him die. And it rained a bitter rain that drenched Him through and through. The crowds went home and left the streets and without a soul to see Christ crouched by a doorway, and He cried for Calvary.