

Transforming Daily
“... *ashamed of the gospel* ...”
Romans 1:16

The book of Romans is probably the most significant book of doctrine regarding the harmony of Theology and Christology. Romans might even be the most significant book of the whole Bible, let alone the New Testament. I might be overstating the case, but because of the key verses, 1:16-17, I don't think so. The message contained in these two verses is the succinct message of Scripture. The book of Romans is predicated upon the message of the gospel and the boldness to proclaim it.

Paul wrote the book of Romans to the church at Rome. At the time of its writing, it's believed that Paul hadn't yet been to Rome, but was well informed of how things were progressing there. Just like other cultures, Rome was resistant to the gospel. However, Rome was resistant in a passive aggressive manner. Rome had incorporated many gods, superstitions, traditions, customs and religions into her Hellenistic ways. So for them the exclusive claim of “The” gospel met with confrontation. Had the gospel been presented as just another religious world view, I'm quite certain there would have been no fuss. But to claim that the founding member, Jesus Christ, is the King of kings and the Lord of lords, that didn't fly.

Well it flew, but in the face of every, pluralistic, polytheistic, multi-deistic belief system and syncretic effort that Rome embraced. Not to mention that the principles of Christianity condemned just about every social and community practice of the Romans from hedonism to secular humanism to Epicureanism to totalitarianism and any other “ism.” To say the least, the environment was extremely hostile toward Christianity. After all, let's not forget who nailed Jesus to the cross.

It was the feared hostility from the people of Rome toward Christians that stood in the way of the spread of the gospel then (that's why Paul wrote to encourage them to remain steadfast and immovable). And it is the feared hostility from the people of many communities, states, and nations toward Christians that stand in the way of the spread of the gospel today (that's why I'm directing your attention to Paul's writings in the book of Romans so that you will be encouraged, steadfast and immovable). I'm not certain what the early Roman Christians feared worse, being right about the exclusivity of the gospel or possibly being wrong about the other false belief systems of the world. You see, if they were right about the gospel, they stood a good chance of experiencing persecution, torture and death (which they did experience). If they were wrong about the numerous false cults of Rome, they would look ridiculous and shameful. They would have no credibility or authority, therefore, no provision or protection.

What about you? Are you fearful to share the gospel? Are you concerned about what other people, believers and non-believers alike, will think of you or say about you? Are you ashamed of the gospel?