



PathLights

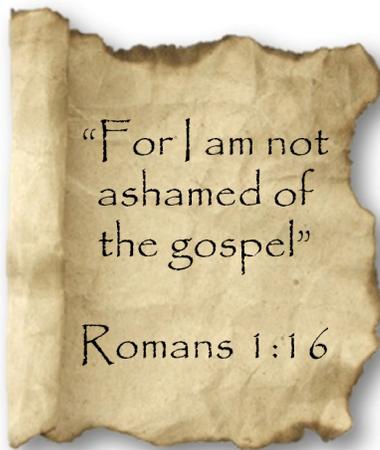
*"Your word is a lamp to my feet
and a light to my path"
Psalm 119:104*

January 14, 2018

I Am Not Ashamed

by Frank Himmel

Paul confidently wrote to the Romans, "For I am not ashamed of the gospel..." (1:16).



The gospel is the good news of salvation in Jesus. Its essential facts are that Jesus died for our sins, that He was buried, and that He was raised from the dead on the third day (1 Corinthians 15:1-4).

The gospel invitation of salvation is open to all. Jesus said, "Go into all the world and preach the gospel to all creation" (Mark 16:15). The proper response to the invitation is faith expressed in baptism. "He who has believed and has been baptized shall be saved..." (v. 16). In another account Jesus summarized the required response as "repentance for forgiveness of sins" (Luke 24:47).

Why would someone ever be ashamed of such a gracious invitation? The answer is, because many people reject it and ridicule or mistreat those who accept it.

Some Jews in Paul's day scoffed at the idea that Christ, the Messiah, would be crucified. "We preach Christ crucified, to Jews a stumbling block" (1 Corinthians 1:23). Others got past that gospel fact, but they could not bring themselves to accept that the invitation was just as open to Gentiles as it was to Jews.

Some Gentiles in Paul's day found the idea of salvation in a crucified Jew foolishness. Some sneered at the very mention of resurrection from the dead (Acts 17:32).

Twenty centuries later, there remains a sizeable portion of society that views the accounts of Jesus as legendary and ridicules the idea that there is any need of salvation. Those of us who believe are thus regarded as some sort of superstitious simpletons.

Some who acknowledge the historicity of Jesus balk at the call for repentance—changing one's way of living to conform to Jesus' teaching. They may well see the value of some changes, but other requirements are dismissed as archaic, out-of-touch with modern reality and our more "advanced" thinking.

And if you preach baptism as a requirement of gospel acceptance, prepare to be opposed by the majority of those who consider themselves partakers of the gospel.

Regardless of the response, Paul was "eager to preach the gospel" (Romans 1:15). God's assessment, not man's, is what mattered to him. May we all have his noble spirit. ■

No Exceptions

by Frank Himmel

The nation of Israel was led by judges for the first several hundred years of its existence. These men (and one woman) valiantly delivered the nation from its foes, unquestionably doing so only by the hand of God.

By the end of Samuel's tenure, Israel had become dissatisfied with their government. They appealed to Samuel, "Now appoint a king for us to judge us like all the nations" (1 Samuel 8:5).

Samuel felt rejected and was distraught, and so he prayed about the matter. God answered, "...they have not rejected you, but they have rejected Me from being king over them" (1 Samuel 8:7).

Long before, as far back as Moses' day, God had envisioned the time when Israel would want a king. Deuteronomy 17 records several God-given restrictions on Israel's royalty. It also includes this requirement:

Now it shall come about when he sits on the throne of his kingdom, he shall write for himself a copy of this law on a scroll in the presence of the Levitical priests. It shall be with him and he shall read it all the days of his life, that he may learn to fear the Lord his God, by carefully observing all the words of this law and these statutes, that his

heart may not be lifted up above his countrymen and that he may not turn aside from the commandment, to the right or the left, so that he and his sons may continue long in his kingdom in the midst of Israel (vv. 18-20).

A king in Israel needed to understand and remember that he was not above the law. What God said about one's attitude, speech, and conduct applied just as much to him as it did to everyone else.

All of us could use that reminder. It's easy to think, "I'm different," somehow that doesn't apply in my case. Yes, it does. Truth is objective. It is definitive. What it says to one, it says to all. No one is exempt.

"There will be tribulation and distress for every soul of man who does evil... but glory and honor and peace to everyone who does good... For there is no partiality with God" (Romans 2:9-11). ■



Service Leaders for the Week		
	Sunday	Wednesday
GREETER SONG LEADER OPENING PRAYER LORD'S SUPPER BREAD CUP CONTRIBUTION PRAYER SERMON/INVITATION CLOSING PRAYER	Greg Winget Carlos Garcia Albert Harrison Sr Steven Turner Kerry Gray Chris Brooks Frank Himmel Josh Baucom	Mark Clifton John Baucom Greg Winget Adam Wilson