

## **The Wednesday Word: January 20, 2021: The Power to Save**

*‘For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ for it is the power of God unto salvation to them that believe’ (Romans 1:16).*

We must be clear what the Bible is saying here. It is not saying that the gospel leads to power. It is saying that the gospel itself is the power of God unto salvation. This is essential to grasp if we want to see the power of God in our churches and ministries.

Usually, today, the gospel is treated as an ‘initial entry doctrine’. In other words, the gospel is good only for those who are not saved. The gospel, we are erroneously told, is merely to get lost sinners saved; but once we are saved, we need to move on into the ‘deep things’ of God.

In the minds of many, the gospel is merely a beginning. But Paul says in the previous verse: ‘So, as much as in me is, I am ready to preach the gospel to you that are at Rome also’ (Romans 1:15).

To which ‘YOU’ is he referring? To which ‘YOU’ is he going to preach the gospel? He’s talking about the believers in Rome who are ‘the beloved of God, called to be saints’ (Romans 1:7). In other words, Paul fully intends to place the gospel where it belongs ... in the church.

He is writing to people who are already saved, and he plans to preach the gospel to them so that they will become ‘more saved’. Before I am accused of heresy, let me explain what I am saying!

### **What salvation means!**

God saves the sinner when he believes but also saves the believer while he believes. The epistles are packed full of the gospel, but they were not written to get the lost sinners saved. Rather, they are written to believers that they might understand salvation and reap its full benefits.

Paul writes, ‘Moreover brethren, I declare to you the gospel ... in which you stand, by which also you are saved if you hold fast that word which I preached to you – unless you believed in vain’ (1 Corinthians 15:1-2). In other words, believers will grow in grace as they continue to keep the gospel in mind!

### **Saved**

So, what do we mean by ‘being saved’? Anyone who has salvation is saved. But salvation is much bigger than justification. Salvation has three tenses – past, present and future. Believers have already been saved from the penalty of sin; they are presently being saved from the power and pleasure of sin; and they will, in the future, be saved from the very presence and possibility of sin.

Among other things, salvation, in its fullest sense includes victory over sin, consecration, spiritual health, freedom from guilt, freedom from bitterness, freedom from fear and rejection, victory over Satan, reconciliation, redemption, adoption and glorification. It is a complete package.

And how do we experience and become partakers of this salvation? It is only through the gospel ... for the gospel of Christ is the power of God unto salvation.

For too long, the gospel has been relegated by many churches to the business of merely 'catching' the lost. We certainly commend all gospel-centered efforts at evangelism and, of course, we do 'catch' the lost with the 'gospel net' but the Bible way to clean the catch is to use the gospel sword.

And that's the Gospel Truth!