

[Easley:] There’s no shame in the Gospel for two reasons; because it is the power of God to save anyone who trusts and it reveals God’s righteousness. God knows the truth. He knows everything we’ve ever done. But there’s one advocate and the advocate is Christ. There’s nothing you can do to contribute to your salvation. He’s done it all. Our response is by faith to live in that relationship with Him. Yeah, at this point faith, a mustard seed. If God gave you that faith that’s all you need.

[Gauger:] The secret of learning, they say, is review. Welcome to *PROCLAIM!* with Michael Easley, the Thursday edition of the broadcast. I’m Jon Gauger. Glad to have you along. Joining us in conversation this morning with a look back is Michael Easley.

Michael, we have thus far gone through eight chapters in Romans and today we’re looking at Chapters 1-4 because it’s easy to let these principles and truths slip through our fingers, isn’t it?

[Easley:] You know, the Book of Romans is so rich and full of wonderful doctrines, wonderful theology. This is a great opportunity to go back and our Producer, Tim Svoboda, has teased out four passages that really underscore some of the key principles in the rich theology of the Book of Romans. So, it’s a good review for all of us and if you’re like me, morning by morning, new verses, you read; so, I need to be reminded of many things that I’ve studied.

[Gauger:] Romans 1:16 implores us have no shame in the Gospel of Christ. But, Michael in this excerpt sets that in very practical terms.

[Easley:] Think of standing on the floor of Congress, or in the chambers, or the Pentagon, or the White House, or the OEB, or under oath, or on television, or in the office, or in front of your company’s owner, or your largest client and say, “I am not ashamed of the Power of God called the Gospel.” Because it is the power to take a broken, alienated creature and move him or her into a relationship with Jesus Christ; and, as it does that, it shows God’s righteousness that He can deal with our sinfulness.

Would you be considered intolerant? Would you lose your job? Here’s the story, here’s the nutshell. There’s no shame in the Gospel for two reasons; because it is the power of God to save anyone who trusts and it reveals God’s righteousness. A righteousness that is appropriated by faith alone. That’s what Paul is saying; complicated and simple at the same time. Have no shame in this message because it’s the Power of God to save people from a broken, alienated relationship to a good relationship, a holy one, a proper one with God. And, as it does that, it reveals God’s righteousness for those who believe in Him.

[Gauger:] Michael Easley looking at Romans 1:16-17 there in a bit of a flashback from an earlier message.

You know, Michael, I wonder if for most of us we haven’t really processed that as we cower in fear of sharing the Gospel, we really are acting like we’re ashamed of it.

[Easley:] It is a ticklish subject, Jon, and I think two prongs. One, we are afraid to share the Gospel for many reasons, but that fear is really, has sort of stirred up because we don’t know how. And, I think learning how to talk about our relationship with Christ, and there’s lots of ways today to interject these conversations. What do you think about God? What do you think about this issue in the news? And, then there’s I’d love to get your opinion about this extreme Islamic view and what about Christianity taking a hammering in the Press. Those kinds of questions can season a conversation and then, we can move into what we believe. And, those to me are the opportunities God gives us that we don’t, you

know, cower as you were and say hey, I've trusted Christ and I'm not ashamed of what Christ has done for me.

[Gauger:] Well, let's take our study review to Romans, Chapter 2, you know, in a day of unprecedented lawsuits and Court TV. It's kind of an eye opening experience to look at Romans 2, Verses 1-16, where it speaks of the impartial judgment of God. And, here's Michael with an excerpt.

[Easley:] So, every person stands before God's court and number one, God's judgment is impartial. Number two, everyone is guilty. There's no innocent victim in this courtroom. "Nobody," Paul says. Jew or Gentile, no one is going to stand there saying I'm innocent because we're all guilty. There is no loophole, there's no escape clause, there's no attorney on the back of the Heavenly Yellow Pages you can call; you are duped, you're naked, secrets are revealed. God knows the truth. He knows everything we've ever done; in secret, out loud. But there's one advocate and the advocate is Christ. He is at once the defense attorney, the prosecuting attorney, the one who takes the blame, and the judge. Because He is the only one who's impartial. He is the only one who is holy. He is the only one who is just. He is the only one that can handle the wrath of God.

[Gauger:] You know, Michael, in a litigious society like ours, it's interesting even for amateurs like ourselves to observe that some of these cases are just plain not fair. Some of these judges are not impartial. But contrast that against this picture of God in Scripture.

[Easley:] I served in a civil court many years ago, Jon, and the, one of the attorneys asked us how many of us had been involved directly or indirectly in a lawsuit; and, out of the 12 of us, 11. I, at that time, had not been involved in some type of litigation.

[Gauger:] Wow.

[Easley:] We live in a context where, I mean, the Court TV, all these things. And, the point to fast-forward is that whenever we're under question or examined, or, you know, tried to prove guilty; theologically, spiritually we are all condemned. We are all sinful. And, apart from Jesus Christ's work the impartial judgment of God would be to condemn us all to hell. But because Christ has interceded, been the substitutionary atonement, taken our place in other words, now we are acquitted because of His work and we stand before a perfect, impartial judge because of what Jesus has done.

[Gauger:] All of which begins to paint a very bright picture of hope, which is the theme of Chapter 3 in Romans. Michael's message was titled, "The Hope of Every Sinner." Let's go back and review a portion of that message.

[Easley:] Paul is telling you and me that the hope of every sinner is that God can make you and me righteous. And, the way He makes us righteous is by the means of grace. Grace then goes into justification. Jesus Christ redemption provides the justice, justification God requires. And, we come full circle to say all I can do is by faith. And, Luther said alone. He inserted the word by faith alone. All I can do is believe. And then, Paul immediately warns, "Don't be arrogant. Don't be proud." Interesting isn't it? There's nothing you can do to contribute to your salvation. He's done it all. Our response is by faith to live in that relationship with Him.

[Gauger:] You know, sitting here listening to this excerpt, Michael, I'm reminded there are all kinds of flavors of hope, and some of them are kind of flimsy; but this is a hope that is unshakable.

[Easley:] You know, and Jon, when I talk to people it seems almost inseparable in our culture that you have to do certain things and not do other things. This theme just, it recurs in all sorts of flavors. And, to

understand what Christ has accomplished on our behalf, again, it's bedrock theology. Nothing I can do can make God love me more. Nothing I can do can contribute to my salvation. And, this, again, is a recurring theme in the Book of Romans. It is by faith that we're justified, not by our works.

[Gauger:] You mentioned faith. Where do we get the faith to believe? And, we can't earn it or buy it. The source of our faith is really a jumping off point though, Michael, for your teaching segment on Romans 4:17-25; and, let's hear that now and follow it up with a little bit of conversation.

[Easley:] I believe God gives us the faith to believe in Him. I believe God gives you the ability, the capacity to put your trust in Jesus Christ. Maybe that's what Jesus meant. You had this much faith, a mustard seed. If God gave you that faith, that's all you need; otherwise, I could be more faithful than you and you more faithful than me. Is that what the New Testament is teaching? Understand there are ways we live a discipleship life. We're sanctified. All those things. I'm not taking that away.

But when we talk about the subject of faith I think many of us are confused about this. What sustained Abraham has to sustain you and me. Faith adheres to God's promise no matter what the torrents of life throw at you and me. The external, the internal, the emotional, the doubts that we all have that Abraham had; they're nourished and strengthened by sound doctrine, they're nourished and strengthened by biblical thinking, they're nourished and strengthened by trusting in His Word and in His works. Not in my ability to get there.

[Gauger:] Justification by faith; boy, that is a very powerful theme emerging from Chapter 4 of Romans. And, that kind of justification, Michael, is something that I think has eluded the understanding of a lot of people whose church backgrounds might have clouded this critical issue.

[Easley:] There are many churches that hold to a different doctrine here that your justification is tempered by your works and your ongoing, your perseverance of doing good works. And, Paul is pretty categorical in Chapters 3 and 4; that there is nothing we can do to contribute to that. Our faith comes from God; the ability to believe in Him, the ability to trust in Him. It would follow then, if Christ's work was sufficient on Calvary, then what in the world am I going to contribute? This, of course, is the problem with the law as well. If we're to keep the law for merit and for, you know, racking up points in the good column, then we're going to forever be back to a management system.

[Gauger:] Right.

[Easley:] We can't -- someone is always going to do better and worse. And, Christ was the perfect sacrifice. He was the perfect example, He was the perfect man, He's God-man; and so, ensconced in all that Jesus is that's where we're justified. So, again, end of the day I'd rather, you know, lay my life on the line on the Word of God and what Jesus has done, then on what I might try to do to sort of add to it.

[Gauger:] Let's come alongside that listener who says I'd like to lay my life on the line now in the way that you're speaking of; and, it's starting to make sense for me. What do I do next?

[Easley:] Well, the first thing you need to do is to put your faith, put your trust to believe in Jesus Christ. Ephesians 2, 8 and 9 is a great reference for me personally. And, what Paul is saying in that passage is you can't earn it, but you can trust, you can receive, you can believe, you can put your faith in what Christ has done. So, that is the first step; to trust Christ to do for you what you cannot do for yourself.

And, we would love to know if you're putting your trust in Christ today when you're listening to this Broadcast of *Proclaim!*. And, Jon, they can call 1-888-NEED-HIM to find out more about making this life-changing decision.

[Gauger:] Yeah, and that number, 1-888-NEED-HIM is toll-free, there is no cost, no hassle, no pressure, no obligation, nothing of the sort. Just a friendly volunteer who will listen to you as you ask questions about what it means to begin a relationship with Jesus; 1-888-NEED-HIM.

We got an email here from Donna who says, “Thanks so much for your help and for the invaluable spiritual counsel derived from listening to *PROCLAIM!*. I’ve listened for many years now,” she says, “and simply don’t know what I would do without it. I’m completely hooked. It’s my food for thought for the day as I listen on my way to work. My spiritual jaw gets a workout all day long due to the endless chewing. Thank you, thank you, thank you.” And, she adds, “I wish to request the complete series on Romans on CD.”

And, Donna and anyone else interested can do that at our website, [www.proclaim.mbn.org](http://www.proclaim.mbn.org). We have two different 7 CD sets; 7 CDs devoted to Chapters 1-4 of Romans and then, a second 7 CD set based on Chapters 5-8. Check it all out online at [www.proclaim.mbn.org](http://www.proclaim.mbn.org).

For our Teacher, Michael Easley; Executive Producer, Tim Svoboda; Producer, Nate McMillan; I’m Jon Gauger saying thanks for listening and hope you’ll be back Friday for more *PROCLAIM!*.