SHARING THE FAITH

by Dorn Muscar, Jr.
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Lesson 1

The Power of God for Salvation

Key Verse

For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek.

(Romans 1:16)

WARM UP

If you had the opportunity to share with someone a passage of Scripture about what God has accomplished through Jesus, for salvation for the world, what passage would you use? John 3:16 perhaps? “For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life.” There is certainly no greater love ever shown than that our Heavenly Father showed through His Son and what our Lord Jesus demonstrated when His life was given for us. It should catch the attention of all who hear, but a major problem in our world is that people think so highly of themselves.

If we tell people that God loves them, many think, Well, of course God loves me. He should. He is God and should cut me some slack. I am really a good person and actually not as bad as many people I know. If there is a heaven, then I should be welcomed in with open arms.
This kind of mindset does not hear the “good news of Christ” as grace and a gift, but as a right and something earned. Even worse, this mindset thinks that what was done through Christ is unnecessary because most think they are “good enough” to dwell with God. This outlook prevents the gospel from being good news and keeps people from repenting of their sins.

**WORK OUT**

So then, what passage or passages could we use to help people see themselves as they actually are in their sins, but also see the magnificent grace of God in the work of Jesus? Romans 5:6-11 is a passage that clearly communicates the power of God for the salvation of humanity. We would do well to understand it and be ready to share it with others. Three simple points from this verse make it easier to understand and share:

- Sin is the problem.
- We are powerless to fix the problem.
- Jesus is the solution.

In the next three chapters we are going to dive deeper into each point within Romans.

**Sin is the problem!**

Virtually, everyone sees that there is something wrong with the world in which we live, and everyone suggests various conclusions. A great way to engage people in conversation that can lead to sharing the Christian faith is to ask, “What do you think is wrong with the world at its core?” The biblical response to this question is “sin.” It means to “miss the mark” or “wander off a certain path.” God has a path in which He wants people to walk, but each person, by a certain age, acts in such a way to wander from that path of righteousness.
The Bible says without exception every single human being, by a certain age, falls into this state of dominion under sin. Romans 5:12 teaches us, “Therefore, just as sin came into the world through one man, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men because all sinned—.” We also learn in Romans 3:23: “For there is no distinction: for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God…” Glory as it’s used here emphasizes the holiness and righteous character of God. Every human being, because of sin, has fallen short of the target to walk in the goodness and righteousness that God intended for us from the beginning when we were made in His likeness.

Because we have sinned, we are rightly called “sinners and ungodly” in Romans 5:6, 8. It is not as though we have just made some minor mistakes in life, but walking in sin means that we are, in fact, walking in opposition to God. If God is in one place and wants us to come to Him, being “ungodly and a sinner” means we have turned the other way and are headed full steam in our own direction. This is why we see the reference to “enemies of God” in Romans 5:10. This word enemy implies intense hatred and hostility toward another. God’s Word teaches that to walk in sin communicates to God a hatred of God’s will and hostility toward His presence in our lives. Most people would never say they were God’s enemies, but God’s Word confirms that, by walking in sin, we have made ourselves enemies of God. Obviously, “enemies” have no hope of enjoying life with God now or forever unless something changes in them. (See Lesson 2).

**We are powerless to fix the sin problem!**

Many people have attempted to explain why this world is “messed up.” Those same people have also suggested a number of solutions to the world’s myriad problems. Some suggest more money or more effective mental health care or better law enforcement. Some think that enforcing new laws or demanding more education given or taking more personal responsibility or exercising greater self-
control or offering more family counseling would work. Truthfully, the list could go on and on. In each of these, it is thought that there is something “we” can do that will correct the problems we see in our world. The gospel of Christ actually shows us that we are all powerless to fix the core problem of sin in our lives and in the world. We need a Savior; a savior who is not held in bondage to sin.

Once all of mankind simply accepts that sin is the main problem in the world, each of us must see it as a personal problem as well. We are not just victims of sin, but we ourselves have each walked the paths of sin. This acknowledgement makes it clear that we are an enemy of God and at odds with our Creator. The next thought a person should have is, How is this problem fixed? Most will think, How do I fix this problem? They will suggest they can just stop doing “bad” things and start doing good things. However, the gospel of Christ shows us that there is no good deed we can do to make us right with God and change our sinful status. Since all humanity is in bondage to sin, someone has to come inside from the outside with a perfect life and help us. (See Lesson 3).

**Jesus is the solution!**

The aforementioned Scriptures shed light on the problem of sin, which makes us enemies of God and our subsequent powerlessness to change the situation with God by our own effort. When a person comes to grasp this truth, the gospel of Christ becomes really good news. The solution the Father and the Son by the power of the Holy Spirit brought about for humanity’s sin problem was through an atoning death of the Son on the cross. We see His death mentioned in (vss. 5:6, 8, 10). He was the only one who could die for us because of His perfection as the Son of God. He put on our flesh and tasted death so that all who believe in Him could be saved from their sins and the wrath of God.

Now re-read to Romans 5:6-11. It should be striking that God
showed love to His enemies according to the gospel of Christ. Paul makes the point that in our world a person might give his life for someone whom is deemed worthy, but no one gives his life for people who are hateful and unrighteous. This is what makes God’s love so extraordinary. We were not worth the saving because of our sin and opposition to God, but God loved us so much that the Father and the Son wanted to make eternal life available to us…all of us (See Lesson 3).

**COOL DOWN**

As it stands, God has proclaimed His love for a rebellious and hostile humanity through the death of His Son. So, each of us must ask ourselves: Do I accept God’s love for me or reject God’s love for me? If I accept God’s love, this means I agree that I am a sinner in need of Jesus to be my Savior! If I reject God’s love, it means that I am confident in my own efforts to please God and am ready to face judgment without Jesus’ sacrifice in my place?

Rejecting God’s love, keeps us in a state of hostility with God, but accepting God’s love means reconciliation with Him. The reconciliation achieved through Christ for those who believe in Him is none other than a demonstration of the power of God to make God’s enemies into His beloved children. There truly can be rejoicing for the Christian because of the peace one now has with God through Jesus: “More than that, we also rejoice in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received reconciliation” (Romans 5:11). Though sin separated us from our God and made us enemies of God enslaved to sin, God sent His Son into the world to be the atoning sacrifice for our sins to make reconciliation possible.
Discussion Questions

1. Read Matthew 28:16-20 and Acts 8:1-4. What does this tell us about who is responsible for sharing the gospel?

2. What passage have you found effective in sharing with others or what passage would you share first with someone about Christ? Why?

3. What is a passage that helped you decide to give your life to Christ? Why?

4. What strikes you about sin being the problem in Romans 5:6-11?

5. What strikes you about the powerlessness of humanity over sin in Romans 5:6-11?

6. What strikes you about Jesus being the solution to the sin problem in Romans 6:5-11?

7. Try to talk to someone about what is the core problem in the world. First, just listen and if you sense the opportunity share that you think sin is the problem. Share with the group how it went.