“I Am Not Ashamed!”

(Click on the link below and listen to this video first.)

https://youtu.be/Wo4I0En3uTM

Someone once asked me the question
What kind of church did I serve in Iowa.

The board chair and I were together and she answered first
“We’re a mainline Protestant congregation.

I kind of disagreed.

I said I thought we were, “evangelical anabaptists.”

Evangelical . . .
Meaning we believe in the basics doctrines of the faith

And Anabaptist . . . meaning we believe in the
Peace-loving, adult-baptizing, feet-washing practices
Of the Church of the Brethren.

However, like Campolo, if someone asked the question today
I would not answer it the same.

I would not use the term evangelical.

I no longer feel “evangelical” fits who I am.

Like every other thing in the world today
The word, “evangelical” has become so politicized
The connotation of which has developed into something I can’t support.

This evangelicalism is something, I confess, I am ashamed of.

For I do not think it represents a true expression of Christianity.

So what does the word evangelical mean?

It is hard to define the term.

From an Atlantic article posted December 7, 2015

By Jonathon Merritt.

The religious historian George Marsden once quipped that in the 1950s and 1960s an evangelical Christian was “anyone who likes Billy Graham.” But when Billy Graham was asked to define the term in the late 1980s, he replied, “Actually, that’s a question I’d like to ask somebody too.” As it turned out, even America’s most famous evangelical preacher couldn’t describe what the term meant.

Actually, the word evangelical comes from the Greek word euangelion.

English translates euangelion as gospel or good news.

Find it in verse 16, “I am not ashamed of the gospel!” The gospel, of course, is the good news.
“I Am Not Ashamed!”

Of what God has done in Jesus.

And this is not just in his atoning death on the cross
But in the total package . . .

The incarnation, his life and ministry
His death as an atonement for sin
The power of his resurrection
And his continued presence in the HS.

That all of who Jesus is
What he said, what he taught,
His healings and deeds
His death and resurrection
The sending of his Holy Spirit

Are all acts of a Redeeming God.

To emphasize solely his death
Diminishes other aspects of Jesus
That God would not want diminished!

The gospel of Jesus Christ
The good news of Jesus
The euangelion of Christ is all of who Jesus is
And what God has done through him.

In that sense, I too can say with Paul
“I am not ashamed of the gospel.
It is the power of God for salvation.”
Romans 1:17 is the signature verse
    That started the Protestant movement.

Some say the Reformation started when Martin Luther
    Nailed his 95 theses to the door
    Of the Wittenburg castle church.

It actually started
    When God revealed the meaning of this passage
    To the Catholic monk, Martin Luther
    Who said in his own words:

"I greatly longed to understand Paul's epistle to the Romans and
nothing stood in the way but that one expression "the righteousness of
God," because I took it to mean that righteousness whereby God is just
and deals justly in punishing the unjust.

My situation was that, although an impeccable monk, I stood before
God as a sinner troubled in conscience, and I had no confidence that
my merit would assuage Him.
Therefore I did not love a just angry God, but rather hated and
murmured against Him. Yet I clung to the dear Paul and had a great
yearning to know what he meant.

Night and day I pondered until I saw the connection between the
righteousness of God and the statement that "the just shall live by
faith." Then I grasped that the righteousness of God is that
righteousness by which through grace and sheer mercy God justifies us
through faith.
Thereupon I felt myself to be reborn and to have gone through open doors into paradise. The whole of Scripture took on a new meaning, and whereas before "the righteousness of God" had filled me with hate, now it became to me inexpressibly sweet in greater love. This passage of Paul became to me a gate to heaven..."

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The bottom line of the gospel is this.

God desires and initiates a relationship with us
   Through the life, death, resurrection
      And continued presence through Jesus Christ.

God initiates it . . . not us.

Through Christ, God restores a right relationship.

In this way, righteousness means right relationship.

You cannot create this right relationship
   By doing anything.

It is uniquely the work of Christ.

Salvation, then, is the transformational awareness
   Of God’s truth found in the gospel
      Bringing right relationship.

It is a gift.
“I Am Not Ashamed!”

That is the difference between the OT and the NT.

Whereas in the Old Testament the people of Israel
  Were given a right relationship or righteousness
    By obeying God’s Law.

In God’s New Covenant in Jesus
  We blessed a right relationship
    Through God’s gracious acts in Jesus.

Whereas before we earned our righteousness
  To be children of God through the Law

Now, by faith in Jesus, we are his adopted children.

Whereas before, we were never able to achieve righteousness
  Because we could never get it right.

Now, despite our weaknesses and disobedience
  God adopts us as his own children.

Maybe a better way to explain it is with a story
  From the great southern preacher
    Fred Craddock.

“A seminary professor was vacationing with his wife
  In Gatlinburg, TN.

One morning
  They were eating breakfast at a little restaurant
While they were waiting for their food
   They noticed a distinguished looking white-haired man
   Moving from table to table visiting with the guests.

The professor leaned over and whispered to his wife
   ‘I hope he doesn’t come over here.’

But sure enough, the man did come over to their table.

‘Where are you folks from?’ he asked in a friendly voice.

‘Oklahoma,’ they answered.

‘Great to have you here in Tennessee,’ the stranger said.

‘What do you do for a living?’

‘I teach at a seminary,’ he replied.

‘Oh, so you teach preachers how to preach, do you?
   Well, I’ve got a really great story for you.’

And with that, the gentleman pulled up a chair
   And sat down at the table with the couple.

The professor groaned and thought to himself
“I Am Not Ashamed!”

‘Great... Just what I need another preacher story!’

The man started, ‘See that mountain over there
Pointing out the restaurant window.

Not far from the base of that mountain
There was a boy born to an unwed mother.

He had a hard time growing up
Because every place he went
He was always asked the same question

'Hey boy, who's your daddy?'

Whether he was at school
In the grocery store or drug store

People would ask the same question, 'Who's your daddy?'

He would hide at recess and lunchtime from other students.

He would avoid going in to stores
Because that question hurt him so bad.

When he was about 12 years old
A new preacher came to his church.

He would always go in late and slip out early
To avoid hearing the question
But one day

The new preacher said the benediction so fast
He got caught and had to walk out with the crowd.

Just about the time he got to the back door

The new preacher, not knowing anything about him
Put his hand on his shoulder and asked him

'Son, who's your daddy?'

The whole church got deathly quiet.

He could feel every eye in the church looking at him.

Now everyone would finally know

The answer to the question, 'Who's your daddy'.

This new preacher, though

Sensed the situation around him

And using discernment that only the Holy Spirit could give

Said the following to that scared little boy:

'Wait a minute!' he said. 'I know who you are.
I see the family resemblance now.
You are a child of God.'
With that he patted the boy on his shoulder and said
    'Boy, you've got a great inheritance.
     Go and claim it.'

With that, the boy smiled for the first time in a long time
    And walked out the door a changed person.

He was never the same again.

Whenever anybody asked him, 'Who's your Daddy?'
    He'd just tell them, 'I'm a Child of God'.

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The distinguished gentleman got up from the table and said
    ‘Isn’t that a great story?’

The professor responded that it really was a great story!

As the man turned to leave, he said
    ‘You know, if that new preacher hadn’t told me
     That I was one of God's children

I probably never would have amounted to anything!’

And he walked away.

The seminary professor and his wife were stunned.

He called the waitress over and asked her
    ‘Do you know who that man was who just left
That was sitting at our table?’

The waitress grinned and said, ‘Of course.

Everybody here knows him.

That’s Ben Hooper

The former governor of Tennessee!’

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The story line found in the Bible is this.

Our Creator God who made all things in heaven and earth
Seeks a relationship with you.

God wants to adopt you as his own . . .
Wants you to claim your inheritance!
For you are a child of God, now and always.

In Jesus, God wants to make you aware of this.
Not only aware, but transformed by it.

Not only personally transformed by it
But to redeem all of Creation.

This is euangelion, the good news of Jesus Christ.

And because of this . . .

I am not ashamed of the gospel
Romans 1:16-17

“I Am Not Ashamed!”

For it is the power of God
For the salvation of everyone and everything!

To God be the Glory.