

“I Am Not Ashamed!”

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

<https://youtu.be/Wo4I0En3uTM>

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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

“I Am Not Ashamed!”

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.

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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.

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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.”

“I Am Not Ashamed!”

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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.

“I Am Not Ashamed!”

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*

“I Am Not Ashamed!”

Hoping to enjoy a quiet, family meal.

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*

“I Am Not Ashamed!”

'Who's your daddy?'

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
the following to that scared little boy:*

Said

'Wait a minute!' he said. 'I know who you are.

I see the family resemblance now.

You are a child of God.'

“I Am Not Ashamed!”

*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*

“I Am Not Ashamed!”

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

“I Am Not Ashamed!”

For it is the power of God

For the salvation of everyone and everything!

To God be the Glory.