

THE PUBLIC NATURE OF YOUR PERSONAL FAITH

Romans 1:16 ... “For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes, for the Jew first and also for the Greek.”

One of the many changes that has happened in the Body of Christ over the past few decades, is a more public demonstration of the faith, beliefs and convictions of believers. The generation of my grandparents (those who were born in the early 1900s and earlier), subscribed to an understanding that their faith in Christ was a private matter. Evangelists like Billy Graham found some opposition to their earliest crusades and meetings in some regions of the world, because of the belief among both church leaders and members that “religious talk” should be reserved for inside the church, and even there it was not discussed openly by members, only the preachers. In the 1960s, young people broke through this stained glass ceiling and began to witness to total strangers on the street, the beach, at school and anywhere they went. They learned through their study of the Bible and from modern ministers, that their personal relationship with Christ was not meant to be hidden or kept a secret, but shared openly.

Today, there is still a division of believers on this subject. Some still hold to former traditions that limit Bible study and discussion to inside the church on Sunday morning, or privately inside their own homes. Other believers are delighted to share their faith anywhere and anytime. They might meet a stranger in a restaurant, in line at a cashier, or at work and ask them if they know Jesus within minutes of meeting. Some folks are offended by this crass behavior, but true believers recognize it as an act of obedience to Christ, who charges us to share him with everyone, in every circumstance. Our verse today from Paul states that he was not ashamed of the gospel of Christ because he understood that only the power of salvation through Christ would save the lost. That must be our position, too. We must care enough about the lost that we become bold in our own faith and proclaim it to all who will listen.

We often refer to your “personal relationship with Christ” in these devotionals. Please do not be confused about this. In speaking about your personal relationship, we are simply referring to the fact that only you can accept the gift of life from our Savior. Your pastor or priest is not your go-between to connect with God. That is something only you can do. You must be born again. No one, no ritual, no ceremony can accomplish a relationship with Christ for you.

When you do accept Christ and choose to obey and serve him, he fills you with his Holy Spirit that empowers you to share your faith with others, something you cannot do if you keep your relationship with Christ a secret. I urge you to publicly declare your faith in Christ so that he can use you to introduce others to him. Our goal must be to take as many people to heaven with us, as we can.

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