

Unashamed (26): In Accordance with the Gospel

(Romans 16:17-27)

I. Introduction

- A. Let's start with a clip that not a bit funny... because it hits too close to home ([clip](#))
1. "Die you heretic scum." That's just a bit mean-spirited, don't you think?
 - a. But that was once the policy of the establish church—they burned heretics at stake
 - b. They justified it, of course. Just purifying the soul by putting body thru the flames
 - c. But the real reason was to get rid of opponents and discourage further opposition
 2. Protestant Reformation broke the monopoly of Catholicism and changed that, right?
 - a. Not really. When Calvin got political power, he oversaw 58 executions of heretics.
 - b. He never accepted that the NT set aside OT; blasphemy texts authorized execution
 - 1) He had one rival burned with green wood... so that he'd burn more slowly
 - 2) "His enforcement of biblical doctrine looked more like ISIS than Jesus" (Penley)
 3. "Die you heretic scum" has been a phrase heard much too often in annuals of history
- B. We'll get to our last lesson on *Unashamed*, but first let's look at NT says about heresy
1. Scholar Inigo Montoya reminds us, "You keep using that word; I do not think it..."
 - a. A heretic is "one who differs in opinion from established religious dogma" (Webster)
 - b. Well, that's what it was for Catholics & Calvin—they established religious dogma
 - 1) And that's what it meant for woman who pushed guy off the bridge in cartoon
 - 2) "Heretic" is one who disagrees with me! 6000 groups see all others as heretics
 - c. Ans Professor Montoya steps in... "Heresy" in NT is not any one false doctrine
 2. The word "heresy" comes from Greek word *hairesis* which originally meant "choice"
 - a. The most common translation the NT is word "sect" or "party" ([Acts 15:5, 26:5](#))
 - b. Paul uses the word in his discussion of Lord's Supper ([1 Cor 11:19](#), NIV/ESV/NET)
 - 1) What were the differences here? Rich eating a lot. Not waiting for poor/slaves.
 - 2) It was about divisions and differences, not doctrine. *Heresy was division!*
 - c. This word *hairesis* also shows up in the list of the works of the flesh ([Gal 5:20](#))
 3. Closely related word means the same thing is *schismata*, from where we get "schism."
 - a. Paul uses this word in the same context where we saw him use *hairesis* ([1 Cor 1:18](#))
 - b. These have nothing to do with doctrine; its fact the church divides into groups
 - c. Paul uses the word later when he says there should be no schisms ([1 Cor 12:25-26](#))

- C. Before we slide into Romans— notice this example from Frank Viola and Greg Boyd—
1. Member they call “Bob” discovers a passion for poor and wants the church to focus
 - a. Church always moves at speed of church; Bob is afraid church will focus elsewhere
 - b. Bob gets on phone and recruits. He complains. He argues. He gets some to agree.
 - 1) He sow seeds of distrust against church leaders. He invites people to meetings
 - 2) His group is disgruntled and that spreads that to others. The church soon splits
 - c. Bob is a “*heretic*” in the NT sense of that word— and he is a heretic in the truth!
 2. The sin of heresy is the division itself; listen to Paul’s warning to Titus (**Titus 3:10**)
 - a. Sure, heresy (*division*) can be created by a false teachers and doctrine (**2 Pet 2:1**)
 - b. There were “*false doctrines*” that perverted gospel (*Judaizers and denying incarnation*)
 - c. But “*heresy*” is sin of just being divisive; you can push any issue or cause to heresy
 - 1) In Corinth, heresy was dividing over favorite preachers (*among other things*)
 - 2) In Rome, heresy was pushing private views on meats and feast days on others
- D. So that brings us to this last lesson in Unashamed—this is how Paul will end Romans
1. We suggested the theme verses of the book, where we got our title, is **Romans 1:16**
 - a. We’ve pounded the idea the last line is not just a throwaway—Paul making a point
 - b. Problem at Rome is the church was made of two factions that didn’t like each other
 - 1) Jewish Christians saw themselves as the chosen people of God— they are Jews
 - 2) Roman Christians were citizens; just soon the Jews go away (*which they had*)
 - c. Point of the book is to bring these groups together (**3:9, 3:22-23, 3:29, 9:24, 10:12**)
 2. Paul ends with sharp eye on division (**Rom 16:17**) Message: “*Keep a sharp eye out*”
 - a. KJV translates this “*mark them,*” which some have read as in “*the mark of Cain*”
 - b. Because they connect it to “*false doctrine.*” Mark heretics! *Watch for the divisive!*
 3. Remember the discussion in **Rom 14-15** on eating meats and observing special days
 - a. Paul isn’t concerned what view one takes if glorify God and respect brother
 - b. If they push any view to divisiveness and division—watch out! *That is true heresy!*
 - c. Such a person (Bob) may think they are serving God—*they are not* (**Rom 16:18**)
 4. Church made a good start in this; don’t let division to bring that to halt (**Rom 16:19**)
 - a. Paul has confidence for their future (**16:20**). But notice whose court the ball is in!
 - b. What is the secret here? How can they avoid the dangers of heresy and schism?
 - c. The secret sauce here is there is no secret sauce! (**Reading: Romans 16:25-27**)

II. In Accordance with the Gospel: Two Points

A. **First**, Paul says “*God is able to establish you*” or “*make you strong*” (NLT) (**Rom 16:25**)

1. Paul like to remind us that “*God is able*” to do what we need Him to do
 - a. He is able to give us everything we need to accomplish our work (**2 Cor 9:8**)
 - b. He is able to more than we can ask or even imagine asking (**Eph 3:20**)
 - c. God is able guard what Paul entrusted in Him until the last day (**2 Tim 1:12**)
 - d. Jude says much the same thing; God is able to keep us from stumbling (**Jude 24**)
2. How are we to live in harmony as Jesus wishes and avoid division and disharmony
 - a. The deck is really stack against us. We’re so different in so many ways, aren’t we?
 - 1) Different racially, socioeconomically, religious backgrounds, educationally, etc
 - 2) In all the ways they were different at Rome; why Paul this letter in first place
 - b. Paul expected them to be one because God is able, and God is still able today
 - c. After all, it is the unity of the Spirit, right? We are to live in but God creates it.
 - 1) We must stop relying on our power. Our smarts. Our ego. Our ingenuity
 - 2) We don’t need the right program? Or logo? Or slogan? We need right God!
3. What did Paul say he wasn’t ashamed of? Why was he not ashamed? (**Rom 1:16**)
 - a. Do we really trust the gospel to be the be power of God for our salvation?
 - b. Or are we still trying to jump through all of the hoops all by ourselves?

B. **Second**, Paul brings up his main thesis one last time... in his doxology (**Rom 16:25b-26**)

1. Paul is talking here about the gospel, this “*message I proclaim about Jesus Christ*”
 - a. But notice his language here— “*mystery hidden for long ages past*” What mystery?
 - b. The mystery is revealed? What mystery? “*Gentiles might come to the obedience*”
 - 1) One more time at the end of the book, he stresses the inclusion of the Gentiles
 - 2) No difference in Jews and Gentiles. That’s in accordance with the gospel
2. That’s often the mystery of the gospel for Paul—God including all of us (**Eph 3:2-6**)
 - a. If I trust God as the power for my salvation, then I can trust Him as power for yours
 - b. We can let ourselves to disagree at times without pushing each other off bridges
 - 1) The mystery is that we are all saved by the power of God through Jesus Christ
 - 2) Jews and Gentiles, red and yellow, black and white, Democrat and Republican
3. We stand together praising and serving God—flawed though we may be (**Rom 16:27**)

C. Paul ends this powerful book calling together under the cross as the only ties that binds