

I Am Not Ashamed

Small Group Guide

Warm-up Question: (Choose one, make up your own, or skip this part all together, depending upon the nature of your group.)

1. What is one thing you like that you're a little embarrassed to tell other people about?
2. Have you ever sung karaoke publicly? If so, how did it go? If not, would you?

Read the following passages: Romans 1:1-32; 3:9-26.

Paul's thesis statement in the longest of his New Testament letters begins with these words: "I am not ashamed of the Gospel." Why would Paul feel compelled to make a statement like that? Almost surely it had something to do with the central events of the Christian faith: the crucifixion and resurrection of Jesus. Crucifixion was the most shameful way to die in the Roman world, and a bodily resurrection sounded outlandish. But for Paul and for us, this Gospel message is the power of God that brings salvation to everyone who believes.

Questions for Discussion (Choose several that are relevant for your group):

1. Read Mark 1:14-15. In what ways did Jesus' ministry align with Jewish expectations regarding the arrival of God's kingdom and in what ways did it differ with popular expectations?
2. Paul begins the body of his letter to the Romans with a statement about God's wrath (Romans 1:18). Why is God angry with human behavior? How is God revealing his wrath (see Romans 1:24, 26, 28)? Does God's anger with human sin mean we should be afraid to approach God? Explain.
3. Why might Jews have thought they were not in the same predicament as Gentiles? What does Paul say now about the typical Jewish perspective (which he likely shared for most of his life)?
4. What precipitated the change in Paul's views concerning the Christian message? How might this be relevant for the ways we talk with people about the Christian faith today?
5. Read Romans 3:21. What does Paul mean by "apart from the law?"
6. Read Romans 3:22. What does it mean to experience the righteousness of God through faith?

7. Read Romans 3:24. What is the significance of the words “justified,” “grace,” and “redemption” in this verse?
8. Read Romans 3:25-26. What was happening on the cross to secure our salvation?
9. Read Romans 6:1-14. What relevance do Jesus’ death and resurrection have to our lives right now?
10. If a non-Christian asked you to explain why the cross is such a significant symbol for Christians, what would you say?

Pray