

SMALL GROUP LESSON

THE GIFT! THOSE JUSTIFIED BY FAITH WILL LIVE

Romans 1:16-17, Ephesians 2:8-9, Romans 3:23-26

OCTOBER 2, 2016

Once upon a time a group of laborers were desperately trying to build a roadway up a mountain to a spring of life giving water. However, half way up the mountain they were confronted by a huge wall of rock that resisted their best efforts to remove it. No matter how hard they tried, hammering away with their picks and sledge hammers, it remained steadfastly in place. One day a man arrived on the scene carrying a small box with something that looked like rows of paper tubes on the inside. He said that he had been sent by the boss to clear away the rock. The laborers were incredulous. He was a puny little man who appeared to have no strength or ability for such an endeavor. They jeered and made fun of him and some even hindered him as he worked. Nevertheless, the little man was steadfast in his efforts. He bored holes in the wall of rock and then placed the little tubes from his box in those holes. Attaching wires to the tubes, he told the workers to back away from the work site, and then pushing down the plunger on the detonator that he had brought, a mighty explosion rocked the mountain side. The wall of rock collapsed and suddenly the workers realized that a way had been opened for them and for all of their families and friends to reach the top of the mountain and the life giving spring at its summit. There was great rejoicing and never again did the workers doubt the power of the little man's explosive tubes or their ability to save them from useless labor when properly detonated.

This story, of course, is a fictitious account, but it was composed for a reason. It, along with the pastor's sermon and the three passages of Scripture listed above, will hopefully help you to answer these questions that arise out of verses 16 and 17 in the first chapter of Paul's letter to the Romans:

1. If you had been the little man with the box of paper tubes, would you have been intimidated and tempted to quit by the jeering laborers? Paul states that he is not ashamed of the Gospel, the good news about Jesus Christ. Do you think he was always well received when he told people about Jesus? Do you think that he may have been tempted to give up when people rejected both him and the message he brought? Why do you think he was so determined, regardless of what others thought of him, to share the Gospel? Do you think that most Christians today are either bold or timid about telling others about God's salvation in Jesus Christ?
2. The little man had a secret weapon for removing the wall of rock. It's called dynamite, and it is derived from the Greek word "dunamis," the exact word that Paul uses when he says that the Gospel is the **power** of God. Do you think the Gospel is powerful? Can it really blast away the wall of sin that separates us from God? Can it really make life on earth a lot easier to live and pave the way for our entrance into heaven?
3. How did the little man ignite the dynamite, and how did that explosion change the lives of those who had been trying to remove the wall of rock? How does faith serve as the detonator of the Gospel? What happened to Paul and Luther and a whole host of other Christians when they discovered that salvation is a gift from God which comes through faith, trusting in what He has done for us through Jesus Christ? Have you been willing to take hold of that detonator and activate its life giving power in your life? How about the lives of others? Do you know someone who is trapped behind a wall of sin that is separating them from God? What can you do to help them blast through that barrier?