

1. Unashamed (In some ways to undertake this as a theme is ambitious—anchored as it is in the book of Romans—a rich, layered treasure of a theological dissertation on what it means to belong and be accepted in the kingdom of God based on the work and glory of God in Jesus. Shame and honor—particularly as this was understood in ancient culture played a major role. Being unashamed for us is often as simple as the definition—"**not ashamed: being without guilt, self-consciousness, or doubt.**" And while this is accurate—there is more to the biblical story than just this. Let's look in context)
2. Romans 1:14-17 (Contextually the statement flows out of Paul's explanation of his mission as he introduces himself to this church whom he had never visited. He details his desire to take the gospel to Spain—one of the purposes of the letter is to enlist the Roman church to help him accomplish this. He wants to visit them to share more. It is all a part of the overall "obligation" of his calling as an apostle—to present the gospel to the Greeks, the barbarians, the wise, the foolish, and yes even the Jews. It is in a collective sense that he states our key verse. It is among all of these different people; for these people and within this diversity that he is not ashamed of the gospel. He realizes it is the only avenue of salvation they have; the only way for them to be brought into the kingdom of God; the only way for them to be right or to become the righteousness of God—the gospel; the story of Jesus; the DBR. **It changes everything.** So yes, it is about not being ashamed to proclaim Jesus; to do so without guilt, self-consciousness or doubt, but it also understanding what that means to do so in and with the community of believers—whether those believers be Greek, Jew or barbarian; or as we would say, red, yellow, black or white. And this was and is not necessarily easy.)
3. "Although they claimed to be wise, they became fools."—Romans 1:22 (Perhaps this verse summarizes the challenge of being unashamed contextually—the hill Paul had to climb in the Roman church for them to truly accept and be unashamed of the gospel. They were proud of the wrong things—even replacing the glory of God for basically their own glory—serving the created things rather than the creator. This spilled over into the church itself—creating a toxic atmosphere of judgements—chapter 2—based on a sense of ethnic or cultural superiority which prevented the Roman Christians from accepting one another in Christ. The heart of the letter speaks right into this context. How can anyone be unashamed of the gospel if they are ashamed of those who are called to the gospel—whether Greek, barbarian or Jew? How can anyone accept the "kindness, tolerance, patience" of God and not be able to extend that to another? So, what all their posturing about DNA, or cultural superiority, really about their own glory did, was make them look foolish, not wise and brought the wrath of God upon them. Not really representative of the unashamed life Paul was calling them to. Now what about us? Where do we fit into this? This is exactly what we will be exploring with this theme. One thing for sure—we do not want to claim to be wise only to really be foolish.)
4. Being Unashamed is About: (in a broad sense as we apply Paul's teaching to Rome—a foundation on which we will build as we move through this idea)

- a. A reorientation and redefinition—Romans 12:1-2 (the old way of orienting lives and defining self has to change—**QUOTE. This is not easy**)
 - b. Living it out in the collective sense—the community of God—Romans 12:3-7 (it is not about me; it is about how I can fit into it, serve and bless the body)
 - c. Unashamedly accepting others—Romans 14:1; 15:7 (regardless of where they came from—after all that is how Christ accepted me and if I cannot do that—there is absolutely no way to truly be unashamed of the gospel.)
 - d. Further proclaiming the gospel—Romans 15:16 (yes, to get to the point where we can actually be not ashamed, not self-conscious or doubting or embarrassed to say we are with Jesus for the sake of the salvation of others.)
5. “Where then is the boasting?”—Romans 3:27; see also 1 Corinthians 1:31 (This is how he broke it down for them—and how we have to as well)