

## **Be Not Ashamed of the Gospel**

Let us go to the Word of God in 2 Timothy chapter 1. 2 Timothy chapter 1. Let us listen attentively to the Word of God, 2 Timothy chapter 1, verses 8 and following. Therefore do not be ashamed of the testimony of our Lord, nor of me his prisoner, but share with me in the sufferings for the gospel according to the power of God, who has saved us and called us with a holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given to us in Christ Jesus before time began, but is now revealed by the appearing of our Savior Jesus Christ, who has abolished death and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel, to which I was appointed a preacher, an apostle, and a teacher of the Gentiles. For this reason I also suffer these things.

Nevertheless, I am not ashamed, for I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed to him until that day. Let us pray. Our Lord and Savior God above, may these words be an encouragement for us, to remind us not only for Timothy, the young pastor, in his duty and responsibility as a public preacher and teacher of the Word of God, not to be ashamed of the testimony of the gospel, of the good news of our Lord and Savior, but neither should we.

May we be encouraged and strengthened and emboldened by this truth here this day as we go out into the reindeer of our lives, Lord, to stand upon Jesus, to stand boldly upon his truth, not to be ashamed of the gospel. By the blood of Christ we pray. Amen.

It is easy today to be embarrassed and fearful in the light of the growing secularization of Christianity. It has changed much, even in our own lifetime, when people now openly ridicule us. It is understandable that we might hold back around people who have made it clear that they want nothing to do with Christianity, look down upon us, and even actively and aggressively resist the truth, mock, and even threaten.

Such pressure is doubly so for church leaders because they are in the limelight in a way the rest of us are not. Everyone is watching what they say and do. If a man like Timothy is especially young, he could be tempted to hold back in the face of those superior to him in age and experience, even within the church itself.

But it is proper for us to stand firm upon the truth of God's word, and we may need encouragement as Timothy here needs encouragement in his ministry to do the things of God, to stand firm in the testimony of our Lord and Savior, and not hold back with the fullness of that truth. So I will unpack this in two points here, if there are almost one, because he repeats the theme, although he gives a slightly different reason in verse 12 for himself. Here in verses 8 and following, therefore, Paul writes, do not be ashamed of the testimony of our Lord.

He's speaking to Timothy saying, do not be ashamed, do not hold back, do not be fearful, do not be embarrassed, timid. In verse 12, he says, I am not ashamed. He's using himself as an example there, Paul.

## **Be not Ashamed of Jesus's Testimony**

But here, he speaks more directly to Timothy himself in a long sentence, as you'll see in the translation from verses 8 to 11. We went over this in Sunday School class, reminding us that it comes to reading through the word of God, using the tools that we have to read English, to read our own language, and understand that some writers like Paul have lots to say in one long sentence. But the main point here is, do not be ashamed of the testimony of our Lord, nor of me, his prisoner.

But it begins with the word, therefore. Therefore, hearkening back to the prior verses and tying it here to this further theme, don't be afraid, don't hold back in your duties. Rather, stir up your gifts, as we read in verse 6, following, because you have the power of God and the Spirit within you to do your duties.

You have love and compassion you exercise towards those who are under you, and that you are of a sound mind, rooted in the confidence of Christ Jesus our Lord and Savior. And because of these things, therefore, we should not be, he should not be embarrassed and ashamed of Jesus and his testimony, that is his truth, his gospel to the world. Not to hold back, O Timothy, as a minister in such a calling as this, the same call that indeed we all have.

Although we are not officers, we too should speak of Christ. We too should not be embarrassed of who he is, but he should not be ashamed in particular of the testimony of our Lord, verse 8, nor of me, his prisoner. So, two things he should not be ashamed of.

Paul as a prisoner. 2 Timothy 2.9 reminds us of this fact as well. For which I suffer, Paul writes, trouble as an evildoer, even to the point of chains, but the word of God is not chained.

See, Paul likes to play off words there. He's reminding him he is chained down, that is, he is a walking prisoner. And here in this verse he ties the imprisonment to Christ in his, that is, as his prisoner.

That is, don't be ashamed of the testimony of our Lord, nor of me, his, that is, Christ's prisoner. Now he's a prisoner to Jesus, of course, as a slave, as a servant, as a follower, but he's playing off again that idea that I'm actually a prisoner as well to Rome, but that's not really important. What's more important is I'm going to Rome because I stand for Jesus.

I'm tied to Jesus as though I'm a prisoner of Jesus. That's his idea here. That he testified of our Lord and Savior, and because of that testimony of identifying with Christ Jesus, he is now imprisoned and going on his way to Caesar to be further imprisoned, perhaps.

We don't know the end of the story, actually, and historically. So he's imprisoned to Jesus in that sense that he joyfully and willingly stands for our Lord and Savior, even to the point of going to jail. Now the word testimony here is where we get the word martyr.

So we think of the word martyr today often as someone who dies for a good cause, preferably the cause of Jesus Christ, to be sure. But the root of the idea is testimony. In that case, their testimony is in their death.

That's why the two are closely identified, obviously. But here, the testimony of Jesus is his whole ministry, of course, and even his death, to be sure. And the emphasis here, of course, is upon Jesus' gospel, the truth of who he is and what he has done and will do for his people and for his church, his death, even his resurrection, the gospel message that Jesus has given us that Paul stands for and that Timothy himself should stand for and not be ashamed of that fact, to be identified with Jesus, that I am his and he is mine.

I'm a follower of him. We too should stand for the testimony of our Lord and Savior, that we are his people bought by his blood. And we should not be ashamed of our Savior who died on the cross publicly before the world, humiliated, for it is an easy thing to be ashamed of.

It can be for some of us, depending on the pressures around us. We should not turn aside out of shame, but rather to be bold and confident as Paul is, as I'll explain further in verse 12. But this calling here, not to be ashamed of Jesus, nor of him as a prisoner, is to that extent applicable for us today, even though we're not officers.

Let us not forget this fact. But instead of doing that, what he ought to do instead, don't be ashamed of Jesus, that he died as a common criminal on the cross, or for myself, I'm being treated as what, a common criminal? That's an embarrassing thing. My best buddy is in jail.

Think about it. The peer pressure around you, they're kind of looking down upon you, kind of friends you hang out with. The magistrate is after them.

Are they coming after you next? Are you a criminal too? That's the implication here, and you can imagine that kind of pressure being upon them. But rather share with me, in the middle of verse 8, in the sufferings for the gospel of Jesus Christ. That is, together to suffer, to suffer ills and difficulties.

Not suffering imprisonment. Paul's not saying, come over here, please, and sit in jail with me. That's not the idea here.

The idea here is publicly identifying with Paul, because others, we read elsewhere, Paul writes about who have left him, because apparently they were embarrassed that Paul is now in jail. What kind of a guy is this, that the magistrate's after him? They don't want to be identified with him. There's a social peer pressure, the social embarrassment that's going on here.

And of course, it could lead to actual imprisonment for Timothy, and for us, and has indeed for others across the world, even to this day. It was becoming more real for Timothy here, as Christianity was more or less identified by most of the Roman authorities at the time as just a sect or part of Judaism, which was accepted and officially recognized by the state, but eventually it would not be the case. And it's becoming more and more the case with conflict with the Jews, that the local magistrates will recognize them as being completely different from Judaism of that day, and thus they'll be officially persecuted, and will be until Constantine in the early 300s, in fact.

So several generations, and they were outlawed, Christianity was, and this is the beginning of it, with Paul, and the temptation here is probably upon Timothy to hold back in the

fullness of preaching the truth, because he too could go into prison and in jail, and maybe even be beaten, to be sure. And Christians today, of course, are mocked and ridiculed across the world. Unfortunately, we see more of it, more of it in my own time, in my own generation.

Politicians and the like blaming us for things we did not do, just like Nero blaming the Christians for the burning of Rome. It hasn't come to that far yet, but it did out in Seattle, where the mayor was blaming the Christians for problems and the like, and it's just simply not true. They hate us.

They hate us because they hate our Father above and our Savior, Jesus Christ. And we should not be ashamed of that fact. We should not be ashamed of our brothers and sisters overseas, and in Africa, as we pray for them, and elsewhere, as they too are being persecuted and thrown in jail, and even killed for the testimony of Jesus Christ, our Lord and Savior, to pray for them.

To say, yes, those are my brothers and sisters. I've never met them, but I know they trust in the Lord Jesus Christ. They testify of Him publicly, and I identify with them as well.

And thus, in that sense, we can share in their suffering. Paul does something interesting here. That could be the end of it, but he goes further, right? We talked about this, again, in Sunday School class, where Paul just goes on and on because he's excited.

And we see that here with a bunch of clauses hanging off the main idea. I got more to say, Paul says. Share with me in the suffering for the gospel.

Could have been the end of it. But he continues on, according to what? The power of God. And what about the power of God? It is this God who has saved us and called us with a holy calling.

And what about that calling? Not according to our works, but according to Him, He purposes in His grace, which is given unto us in Christ Jesus. What about this Jesus? It has now been revealed to us, verse 10. And so we learn about life and immortality and light through the gospel.

What gospel is this? The one I was appointed to preach. That's his thinking. See, that's the whole stream of it there.

So let's get into it. Here, verse 8b, or the latter part of verse 8 into verse 9, sharing the sufferings of the gospel according to the power of God. The gospel is indeed about grace and longsuffering and mercy of our heavenly judge, who is now our Father.

But it's meaningless without power and might behind it. The grace of God is not His well-wishing from on high of a Father who's wringing His hands and is hoping good things happen to us, but is the will of the Lord of creation who made heaven and earth and outstretched His hands to conquer sin and death for you, brothers and sisters, and to conquer our stubborn will, melting it under His holy fire. That's the power of God.

The gospel is according to the power of Lord God, omnipotent, almighty God above. Power must be there or there is no gospel, because without power it is ineffectual pleading of a Father. The omnipotent, mighty act of God is what we have instead, who tears down walls around rebellious souls and smashes the heart of stone, turning them into what? Clay, pliable in His hands, as we read in Romans 9 and elsewhere.

It is this power that undergirds grace and redemption, and without it, it is meaningless. It is just wishful thinking from the divine. And so a gospel without power, the omnipotent power of the Creator God, who made heaven and earth with but a word.

And we struggle to leave the planet, to land somewhere on the moon now and then. Our devices break down. Our power is impotent and nothing compared to Him.

This is what He's talking about. This is what He is encouraging. Timothy, don't be ashamed, but rather participate in the sufferings because of this gospel.

What kind of gospel is this? The one worthy of submitting to and believing is because it is the power of God to change lives, we read in Romans 1. It is the grace of God. Do not be ashamed. This gospel according to the power of God who saves us and calls us with a holy calling.

Saving us, that's the mercy, that's the grace, that's the compassion of God, but according to His own purpose and grace, where the word grace is actually used there. But the salvation and deliverance that we have, saving us from sin and the consequences of sin, that we are called out of darkness into His glorious light. He called us with a holy calling, verse 9, a unique calling, a calling unto holiness.

Paul and Timothy's calling, of course, are their office. But not only their office, their office is rooted in the fact that they are Christians like us, like you and like me. And to that extent, which is a great extent, we have much in common with the words of Paul here given to Timothy, words that should encourage us as well to strengthen us and embolden us to follow our Savior and not to be ashamed of the power of God that delivers us and calls us with an effectual calling that will never fail.

Our call is a common call as they have a common call as well of all Christians to be holy, to be separated from the sinful world. You may not be a preacher or a deacon, but you do have the calling to stand upon Jesus, to follow Him all the days of your life. And that calling, that salvation that we are saved by is not according to our works.

Paul wants to make that clear again. Why? Well, the Jewish context. Timothy is half Jew.

His mother and grandmother, his father was a Gentile. And he was raised in a holy religion. But of course, like us today, they were not perfect.

And errors crept in. The Phariseeism was especially strong in that day and age in which they argued that somehow our efforts, our obedience, just being the sons of Abraham makes us special in some way, intrinsic to ourselves. And so they glorified before God in their own works.

I am not like that text collector. No, no. A thousand times no.

The glorious grace of God, the excitement that Paul has that salvation is not of works, not according to works, not based upon works, not based upon your obedience, how good you are, how much you can fulfill the Ten Commandments, how often you go to church, none of that. Let any man should boast. We read elsewhere in the writings of Paul.

Salvation is not founded upon these things, whether in our hands, with our mouth, or in our heart. How sincere is my faith! It too is turned often in the hearts of men into a work. My faith commends me before God as such.

But that is never the case. They are turning, therefore, faith there into a work, which they could boast before God. Rather, that mercy is in himself.

So he says it on the one hand here, that we are saved, we are called, not according to works. I want to make that clear, Timothy. Don't forget that important point.

But rather, according to his own purpose and grace. So it's not you, anything you've done, could do, could think about doing, but to make it clear, it's according to his purpose and grace, his everlasting love and compassion upon you. That leaves no room for man, does it? Nothing there about what we do, not even faith itself, because we know that's a gift of God.

But according to his own purpose, echoing Ephesians 1, we read that refrain and idea multiple times there in the opening verses. Paul expounds with much detail, but here he just makes it very concise here, according to his own purpose, that is, within himself. And it's a strong destructive here, not works, but rather, on the other hand, according to his own purpose, his own grace, his own plans from eternity past, because whatever God has done is from eternity past, because he is eternal, that therefore we are saved.

Before time began, and according to grace, unmerited favor, mercy, compassion, and not of our own bragging. We read here, the glories of the gospel in such simple words, short words, but great and marvelous words to encourage us today, brothers and sisters. Then he continues on here, but as now revealed by the appearing of our Savior Jesus Christ, who was abolished death and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel, the good news.

God's eternal plans don't stay in the past, his purposes that he has within himself that are not based upon how much we can cajole him and convince him because of our works or efforts. This is eventually revealed in history, a little here and a little there, of course, in the Old Testament, we see the gospel over and over again. We see it in the Psalms themselves, that's the good news, that it's what God has done, what he's going to promise, of course, in the Old Testament of the Messiah to come, he will do all these things for you.

He is going to save you, he can save you now if you believe in him, if you trust in him, if you cling to him. And here, his appearance is the fullness of that promised salvation of old, and the second member of the Trinity comes to earth, our Savior and our God, to show us redemption, not only in his words but in his actions for us, and direct us to salvation by what

he has done. He's overcome sin and death, who has abolished death and brought life and immortality, he says it two different ways, to light, to the revelation, to the gospel, the gospel is the light of the truth that Jesus Christ has conquered sin and death.

You should be excited about that, Timothy, and indeed all of us should be, because without it, we are much miserable men and women. He's encouraging Timothy not to be ashamed of the testimony, and give you some reasons here, lots of reasons. It's a glorious gospel, it's a powerful gospel, it's a gospel of life and light instead of death and damnation, which is the way of all the world and men, who has abolished death and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel.

And this reminds him to come back, as it were, from the glories of heaven and of redemption, of contemplating Jesus Christ and him crucified and resurrected and ascended on high. Oh yes, I'm also an officer, I'm a pastor, I have a job to preach this message, to which I was appointed the gospel, the light of the gospel, the truth, revelation that all can see, a preacher, an apostle, and a teacher of the Gentiles. All of this, suffering for Christ's sake for the gospel, which is the power of God to save, which is based upon grace and grace alone, which was determined from eternity past and revealed by Jesus who conquered death, is my message as well.

To deliver to all, specifies of course the Gentiles here, to teach and preach this truth. Because Christ chose him. This is the message he was appointed to, anointed towards, given this special responsibility in a public way the rest of us do not have.

To teach and preach the gospel, right? He's a preacher and a teacher, almost the same idea, although there are two different words and they overlap very much so, to be sure. And an apostle, which is his office, that is one who is sent by another, given authorization to speak in his name, to preach these words, to teach these words, to present and instruct others in this truth. That's what he has.

Specifically here, a preacher to the Gentiles. At the end of Acts, you may recall, it shows us the Jews who had not heard about him still resisted his message. They're like, we don't know who you are, Paul.

We don't know what's been going on. We don't have the internet. We don't have a telephone.

It's like a couple of months to get across the Mediterranean from one end to the other and now you're here? This is all new to us. So in Acts 28-23, the last chapter of the book of Acts, we have this interesting story. And I think it explains why here in 2 Timothy he speaks to the Gentiles and not the Jews.

Because 2 Timothy, I remind us, is probably one of the last books he wrote. Acts 28-23, so when they had appointed him a day, that is the Jews, a time to talk to them, right? Many came to him at his lodging because he was under house arrest. So he had some freedom somewhat to move around, but he's got a soldier there probably always chained to him.

So the soldier gets to hear all this stuff. Can you imagine that? To whom he explained and solemnly testified of the kingdom of God, persuading them concerning Jesus from both the law of Moses and the prophets from morning till evening all day. He did not give up.

And some were persuaded by the things which were spoken and some disbelieved. So when they did not agree among themselves, they departed after Paul had said one word, the Holy Spirit spoke rightly through Isaiah the prophet to our fathers, this is Paul speaking, saying, go to this people and say, hearing you will hear, and say, hearing you will hear and shall not understand, and seeing you will see and not perceive. For the hearts of this people have grown dull, their ears are hard of hearing, and their eyes they have closed, lest they should see with their eyes and hear with their ears, lest they should understand with their hearts in turn, so that I should heal them.

Therefore, let it be known to you that the salvation of God has been sent to the Gentiles, and they will hear it. And when he had said these words, the Jews departed and had great dispute among themselves. It's almost like he was just done with them.

But maybe not. But nevertheless, we see a growing obstinance of the heart of the Jews and the story unfolding in the early church in the book of Acts. And unfortunately, it's still with them today.

And thus we see why I think Paul ties it here to that fact of the Gentiles. His office was hated. This is one reason why he suffered.

Part of the suffering wasn't just Rome and the chains, but also his own people hating the message and hating him. Verse 12, the last point, for this reason I also suffer these things. Nevertheless, I am not ashamed, for I know whom I have believed.

## **Be not Ashamed of Jesus's Gospel**

So Paul is not ashamed. He gave an implied answer in verses 8-11 why, and why Timothy shouldn't be ashamed, and why we shouldn't be ashamed. The wonderful, glorious, omnipotent power and might of salvation granted to us by Jesus Christ our Lord and Savior.

A salvation not to be embarrassed and ashamed of. But here Paul is a little more explicit. He has confidence, giving another reason why he should not be ashamed.

And by extension, of course, Timothy should not be ashamed. This is just for his own edification. Well, by the way, you know, Timothy, I'm not ashamed.

No, he's saying, look at me, you too can not be ashamed if you understand the things I understand. He's talking to Timothy, that's the point. Even if he talks indirectly, because he's being, I think, compassionate here.

He has confidence, in other words. This is why he's not ashamed. Not only the glories of the gospel, you could read that in verses 9, 10, and 11.

That should be enough, but we know we are weak, just like Timothy can be weak, or we can be weak in our own time, in our own ways. We need other reasons, and he gives more reasons here. His confidence in Christ and his power to save.

Nevertheless, I am not ashamed, for I know whom I have believed, that's one thing, and I'm persuaded that he is able to keep what I have committed to him, that's another thing. He gives two reasons why, that he is emboldened because of Christ and of Christ's power and ability. He knows of Christ, that is, Paul's shame washes away, his embarrassment flees as the snow flees in a sunny day, when faith looks to our glorious Savior.

Not to itself, because our faith ebbs and flows, but faith is meaningless without an object, and that object is Jesus Christ. It must look, it must believe, it must rest, it must rely upon him, the glories of the gospel. Then secondly, he knows that Christ is able.

He has power. He's omnipotent. He will deliver me in the last day to keep what I have committed to him until that day.

What day? The next day? No, we all know that day is the final day, the second time that Jesus returns for a final time. It's the end of this heaven and earth, the creation of a new heaven and earth, the day of judgment and of might, when he sits on the great white throne. He has committed himself to Jesus, and Jesus will deliver him, that is, save him.

He is able to keep what he has committed or deposited as a trust, is the idea there, because Jesus is trustworthy indeed. Paul is not ashamed, and we should not be ashamed, because Christ is able and willing to keep our salvation until the fullness of his return, and nothing can take it away, brothers and sisters, not Rome, not the Jews, not the lies of today, the temptations around us and within us. The creator of heaven and earth directs his omnipotent might, the power of God, verse 8, to save and to deliver of your soul, to conquer death, in fact, Jesus Christ, who has abolished death and brought about eternal life and salvation.

This is the God to whom we have entrusted our souls and our lives. Why should we be ashamed of that? And this should be your hope as well, as I believe it is, and I pray it is for all of us. He is able to preserve you body and soul.

Has he not done so already? You are here, you believe in him, you strive against the world, the flesh and the devil. You have every reason to rely upon Christ to keep your soul, for his word is truth and does not lie. History has shown over and over again that he preserves his people and he will not fail, and therefore be not ashamed of the gospel.

You may feel weak, to be sure, but the Lord is stronger. Your faith may seem fickle, but Christ is sure and steadfast. Ignore what people say, because they will say more things against us than our Lord and Savior.

They mock us for affirming God's electing power in Christ. What kind of a gospel is that? They ridicule Jesus, the God-man, hanging on the cross. The atheists say, why would I trust and believe in a God who dies and is publicly shamed? And even religious people deride the fullness of justifying power of Jesus, saying, is it really faith alone? Yea, has God said? And

they put pressure upon us, and they claim instead that our works must be some part of it, even if it's free will, they say.

And we are rather, instead of holding back, being ashamed and embarrassed, worried or scared, we should embrace those truths. Jesus does save, and he has saved from eternity past. We are not saved by works.

Faith is a gift of God. And perseverance of the saints is because of the Spirit of God who preserves us for eternity. We believe not in just another man, but in Jesus Christ, the God-man.

And our deliverer is not just another pushover, but the Lord God Almighty, who has conquered and trampled down Satan and death itself. You know whom you have believed, brothers and sisters, and I pray that you are persuaded that he is able to keep what you have committed to him until that day, and therefore, there is no reason to be ashamed of Jesus Christ and his gospel. Let us pray.

We rejoice, God Almighty, in these wonderful truths and these words where Paul gives a short sermon of sorts, it seems, of the wonders of Jesus Christ, of the gospel, that we are saved not according to our works, but by the power of God and his purposes, which he has purposed in Jesus Christ from before time began, our Lord. And for this reason, we are not ashamed. And I pray we would not be ashamed, for certainly we will have such temptations, Lord.

May your Spirit be upon us. May we meditate upon these truths and memorize what we need, so that when the opportunity arises, when temptation comes around us, when peer pressure arises its ugly head, that we will stand firm and not be ashamed, but rather to be emboldened, for we know that we are persuaded that he is able to keep what he has, what we have committed to him until that day. Amen.