

Before Communism... China in 1899 was experiencing what has been dubbed... "the Boxer Rebellion." ... Extreme Chinese nationalists launched a campaign of **terror** against anything that looked foreign (or wasn't traditional Chinese). ... This included Christianity... so missionaries and even Chinese Christians were threatened and bullied.

One reported event told of a certain mission station that was holding worship services when revolutionaries surrounded it. They sealed off every exit but one. At the only open exit... they laid a cross on the ground and told anyone who wanted to leave... that they must trample the cross as they left... thereby denouncing their faith in Christianity.

The first seven students who departed did exactly **that**- and were spared. The eighth person to appear in the doorway (a young girl) approached the cross... knelt down... and prayed for strength. Then she got up... carefully walked around the cross... and was immediately shot to death. ... The remaining 92 worshippers followed her example and did the same. They also walked around the cross to their deaths. ... [P A U S E] ...

A Ship in the Harbor is safe indeed... But that isn't what ships are made for!

Have you ever considered what it would take to shake your faith in Christ? At the threat of your very life... would you stay true to Him? I know that this is NOT a pleasant way of thinking. But it is vital that we ask this of ourselves!

Unless we are prepared... many of us will falter. ... Probably most of us must admit to being shamed (at times) in feeling embarrassed or uncomfortable about being identified as a Christian.

Maybe we were intimidated and fearful of being shamed by some who is well-versed in science. ... We didn't want to look foolish for investing ourselves into a belief – which the intellectuals of our day... often oppose. ... Many of us have feared that if it were known that we were Christian... that it would affect our popularity in school... or our social standing or our success in business. ... And sometimes our fear rises ... because we know our own deficiencies. We dread that the person who learns that we are a Christian... will see something in our lifestyle that is inconsistent with our statements of faith. ... There are SO MANY reasons why we (as believers) keep silent about our belief in Christ.

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Have you ever been embarrassed? ... Have you ever been ashamed of Christ... hoping that no one will think that you are a Christian? Have you ever decided not to speak up for what is right? ... or just wanted to blend in with the crowd? ... Are there times when you merely accept (and go along with) our culture's non-Christian values - no longer registering any kind of disgust by the majority of twisted lies and filth that comes over the airwaves and through magazines? ... Have you ever tired of speaking out?

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In our own struggle against shame... it is helpful to recognize that stronger men than you... me... and Timothy have wilted with shame and suffering. ... The iron-willed... sword-wielding Apostle Peter... had loudly declared, "*Lord, I am ready to go with you to prison and to death*" (Luke 22:33)... but soon after saying this... was too ashamed to admit he knew Jesus... and denied him outright before the soldiers and a servant girl as Jesus watched (Luke 22:56–62). Peter fled the shame of knowing and suffering for Christ.

Thankfully Christ restored Peter – and made him bold enough... that we see him in Acts standing up to the National leaders of Israel... and boldly proclaim that they murdered their Messiah and need to repent. ...

(LISTEN!) There is hope for you and I - that God will restore us when we miserably fail Him.

In our passage of study this morning... the Apostle Paul is involved in the process of God restoring Timothy. He tells Timothy to not be ashamed of Christ. (You see) part of what we talked about last week... was that Timothy had hit the wall of ministry. He had battled for more than 5 years with the false teachers in Ephesus – and they had apparently prevailed. Some had been expelled from the church by Paul – but they had come roaring back... and (now) Timothy was sulking.

I don't see Timothy as particularly endowed with a powerful body and iron constitution. He was frail. He was not bold... but reserved. And he was not a natural leader. But (that being said) consider what Oswald Chambers wrote:

“All through history God has chosen and used nobodies, because their unusual dependence on him made possible the unique display of his power and grace. He chose and used somebodies only when they renounced dependence on their natural abilities and resources.”

If this is true (and it is!), then Timothy was the right man for the job. ... Paul was ready to pass the mantel of ministry on to him. (Paul was in prison... and he knew that he was about to be executed.)

Yet Timothy was SO MUCH like you and me... All of us are tempted at times to be ashamed of our faith.

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Timothy serves as a good lesson to us. There is hope for **all** of us... even if we have collapsed and fallen (when we should have stood tall for Christ.) But we need to realize what Paul challenges Timothy with... in our passage today. ... It actually begins with where we ended last week... (on the two verses where Paul had charged Timothy to develop and use his gift fearlessly and earnestly - 1:6–7).

2 Timothy 1:6-7 (ESV)

⁶ For this reason I remind you to fan into flame the gift of God, which is in you through the laying on of my hands, ⁷ for God gave us a spirit not of fear but of power and love and self-control.

Notice the past tense (here.) “God gave you...” In other words, Christian, you don’t have to hope someday to receive these. God has **already** provided these resources to us. *He did not give you a spirit of timidity. He **has given** you power... love... and discipline.* Ignoring this results in a timid faith... that God will not use. (We will keep wilting...being ashamed.)

“Timidity” (or δειλα in the original language) speaks of a “cowardly lack of confidence” ... or our being ashamed of Him. ... Rely on His resources... that God has already given you. ...The resources that He has given to us is power... love... and discipline. It is no small rowboat that God has given us! It is a battleship meant for the high seas!

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Speaking directly to Timothy (and indirectly to all believers)... Paul... in our passage today... sets forth **five** principles by which you and I can guard against being ashamed of Christ. (LISTEN!) We need to stop being ashamed of Christ. ... So... look with me (now) and see how it **is** possible... for nobodies like Timothy... you... and I.

Last week we saw the first principle. It is: consider your resources... You have already been given POWER... LOVE... and DISCIPLINE. Your boat is ready to sail-Right Now! ... But here are a few more things we need.

2 Tim 1:8

Before I begin to unpack some of the things in this verse... let me point out that... over in 2 Timothy 2:17-18... Paul revealed what the false teaching was... that made Timothy ashamed of the Gospel and of Paul.

Hymenaeus (and his minions) were telling folks that the resurrection (a spiritual resurrection) is all that would happen... (There would be no literal PHYSICAL resurrection... it would only be “spiritual”) and **that** had already taken place. This false teaching said that those who had experienced the spiritual resurrection had been so endowed with the Spirit that their life-difficulties were overcome. Life (with a spiritual resurrection) was now trouble-free. So (in essence) Paul’s sufferings and imprisonment was tangible proof that the Holy Spirit was not with Paul.

The true Gospel declares that suffering is involved for the believer. But the false teachers had gotten to Timothy... making him feel ashamed of it – and of Paul. ... (You see)... along with their bad theology... they spread the non-truthful implication (from it) that Paul’s sufferings and imprisonment in Rome... were due to his shamefully unspiritual nature... and the disapproval of the Holy Spirit.

What does this sound like from our own day...? ... Their theology was just like today’s “*health and wealth*” preachers.... who say God makes everyone who has **true** faith - Healthy and Wealthy. Suffering shows that you lack true faith! ... (But these false preachers of our day – can **never**

preach what Paul tells Timothy in our passage today. They have to ignore it.) ... In 2 Timothy 1:8... Paul admonished us to **accept our suffering**.

We must stop fighting against the consequences of being faithful. When we live a godly... moral life... before our unsaved family members...unsaved co-workers...neighbors...fellow students...we can expect hostility in some form or another. (It is the consequence of being faithful ... because their immorality and ungodliness will be more apparent by contrast!)

It is like turning a rock over that you come across while walking through the forest. Once exposed to the light... bugs scatter everywhere darting back to the darkness which they prefer. ... When our lives (like the light of the sun) expose what our unsaved friends and family want to keep in darkness... we are resented. ... Look what Paul wrote two chapters later... in this same letter. (Here is another verse that the false teachers of the Health and Wealth fake gospel must ignore):

2 Timothy 3:12 (ESV)

¹² Indeed, all who desire to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted,

Expect suffering. Every godly life **will** experience it. If you don't know that it is coming - you will very likely be ashamed of Christ when the threat of it comes. ... But our verse (here) also tells us HOW we are to share in the suffering for the Gospel – it is by the power of God!

God gives us power is what v. 8 is saying!

By nature... none of us enjoys suffering. Even our Lord prayed, “*Father, if Thou be willing, remove this cup from Me*” (Luke 22:42); and Paul prayed three times for God to remove his painful thorn in the flesh (2 Cor. 12:7–8).

... Christians sometimes suffer because we have done right and served God. But God gives us power in facing suffering – when we need it.

As I was preparing for today's message... I read about a Christian who was in prison because of his faith. He was to be burned at the stake... and he was certain he would never be able to endure the suffering. ... One night... he experimented with pain by putting his little finger into the candle flame. It hurt... and he immediately withdrew it. "*I will disgrace my Lord,*" he said to himself. "*I cannot bear the pain.*" ... But when the hour came for him to die... he praised God and gave a noble witness for Jesus Christ. God gave him the power *when he needed it*, and not before. (LISTEN!) **By God's power we endure hardship.**

Indeed... there is a marvelous mystery in the biblical concept of **strength through weakness**. Jesus supplies sufficient strength to His followers so they can endure opposition... weakness... and persecution. Paul says elsewhere:

2 Corinthians 12:9-10 (ESV)

⁹ *But he said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness." Therefore I will boast all the more gladly of my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may rest upon me.*

¹⁰ *For the sake of Christ, then, I am content with weaknesses, insults, hardships, persecutions, and calamities. For when I am weak, then I am strong.*

Your boat is ready to sail! ... **A Ship in the Harbor is safe indeed... But that isn't what ships are made for!** 1) Recognize your resources - POWER... LOVE... and DISCIPLINE 2) Accept your suffering (knowing that God will give you power to endure)... and next... 3) Remember your calling.

2 Tim 1:9-10

(Wow! - O - Wow!) These verses teach... that there is a calling that God set before the heavens and earth were created – for you and I to uniquely serve Him with the tasks He prepared for us. (LISTEN) God designed your life as a ship to sail - **And He has a specific route for you to take! ...** Your life has a purpose... which God planned from all eternity.

Isn't that amazing? Christian! There are things you will face tomorrow that God has placed there... in order for you to serve Him for His kingdom purpose. ... This afternoon... you will walk into situations that God had established long before the ages began. Get the big picture. You are here to serve Him. And just as verse 9 points out...it is not because you have so much great **potential** or have done such great things for Him. He set all this up for you for no other reason than His Own purpose and desire to grant you what you do not deserve!

The emphasis in this verse is on *grace*. But let's face it: We like grace... so long as it's on our terms... Chuck Swindoll writes. We want grace without humility. We want grace without suffering. We want grace that brings us happiness and comfort. We want grace in the time and manner of our own choosing. We want it here and now, in this realm, as well as in the life to come. And we want grace in return for faithfulness. But here is how Paul would have Timothy (and us) regard grace:

“Timothy, shore up your life anchored by sovereign grace. It doesn't start with you; it doesn't end with you; it isn't about you. You're merely a link in the chain of God's plan. As it works its way out, it's not for your health and wealth, happiness and safety, or for your glory or your power or your significance. Before God created time and space, and before He placed humanity within a pristine creation, He established His plan, based on grace alone, accomplished by Christ

alone, to be received through faith alone. And we have the astonishing privilege of communicating it to the rest of humanity!”¹

He has made no effect of death. ... Death means something altogether different to the child of God — Christ made it of no effect. ... For Christians all apprehension about what lies beyond death is gone. ... Perhaps this is the most powerful antidote to Timothy’s timidity and tendency to feel shame...(and for us too)... We must realize that Christ “destroyed death” and our death does not mean our end. It means our beginning! All of God’s plans for us continue – now in glory!

Your boat is ready to sail! ... **A Ship in the Harbor is safe indeed... But that isn’t what ships are made for!** 1) Recognize your resources - POWER... LOVE... and DISCIPLINE... 2) Accept your suffering... (knowing that God will give you power to endure)... 3) Remember your calling... (God has planned the details of your route)... and... 4) Realize your duty...

2 Tim 1:11-12a

Paul... in the original language... emphasizes his own personal duty. He puts the word *εγω* in an emphatic position to say, *I, myself, was appointed a preacher and apostle.*” In other words... we all are given specific duties. God might have appointed you to be a teacher... or something else that is more behind the scenes (rather than as an upfront person.) But He has appointed you to something. Don’t ignore it. Do not stay in your harbor!

¹ Charles R. Swindoll, [1 & 2 Timothy, Titus](#), vol. 11, Swindoll’s Living Insights New Testament Commentary (Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale House Publishers, Inc., 2014), 178.

Recognize your resources... Accept your suffering...Remember your calling...Realize your personal duty... Next - **trust your security**.

2 Tim 1:12b

Trust in the One... Who is so powerful... that even the weak faith of “a nobody” ... is sufficient to produce boldness.

I love the story that is told about the great preacher and theologian Donald Grey Barnhouse. Dr Barnhouse was the Pastor of Tenth Presbyterian Church in Philadelphia. He used to have Sunday afternoons dedicated to a meeting with young people from college and high school, who would pack the auditorium in that great church to hear Dr Barnhouse answer questions from the Bible. On one such occasion a young man asked this question: *“Dr Barnhouse, how could it be that two million Israelites could wander through the wilderness of Sinai, a barren desert, for forty years, and be supplied with adequate food, water, and clothing, so that at the end of that forty years it is recorded of them that their clothing had not even worn out?”* Dr Barnhouse’s answer was one word. In that deep voice, he replied, **“God!** Next question, please.”

Yes... our God is immense! He is perfectly capable. *“I know whom I have believed, and I am persuaded that He is able to keep what I have committed unto Him against that day.”* Our security is **God**.

Recognize your resources... Accept your suffering...Remember your calling...Realize your personal duty... Trust your true security (God Himself)... and Guard the Word of God (hold to your Biblical convictions.)

2 Tim 1:13-14

Our pattern of sound words (that we have today) is the Scriptures. ... They are standards which give us hope and direct our lives. We cannot live without them... and we must not let the world take them from us or drown them out.

From the beginning of human history... Satan has opposed God's Word. "*Did God REALLY say...?*" was Satan's first conversation with mankind (Gen. 3:1)... and he continues to ask that question. Throughout the history of the church... the Word of God has been attacked... often by people *within* the church - yet it still stands today. Why? ... Because dedicated men and women have (like Paul and Timothy) guarded the deposit and faithfully handed it to a new generation of Christians. ... When a church or any other Christian organization goes liberal... it usually starts with a weakening of their leaders' convictions about the Word of God.

Every one of us are under a powerful assault from the spirit of the age... expressed through the media. The wind howls and powerful sea swells... which challenges the morals and the ethical standards of the Bible. This assault makes many of us wonder... at times... if the standards of the world are really so bad after all.

After hanging around the harbor... believers start asking themselves, "*Is it really wrong to sleep with someone outside of marriage?*" (Recognize that is a euphemism: the thing they do **not** do... is sleep). "*Everybody else is doing it,*" they say, "*everybody says it is not going to hurt anything; no bad results will follow.*"

Many Christian marriages are faced with the thought, "*Is it so bad to get a divorce these days? Everybody seems to be doing it. When marriage*

becomes boring or difficult, what is so bad about breaking up, and getting a partner with whom I feel more compatible? Is that so bad?"

Some may think, *"Why not fudge on my income tax a little. Does the government have to know everything? Can't I keep a little for myself... they are just going to spend it on matters that I do not approve of...?"*

We have all felt this alluring temptation to change our standards. We fix our gaze on the wind and the waves! ... The apostle's advice is: keep and guard your Biblical convictions. Guarding our standards...means to obey them and treat them as the treasure that they are.

Sometimes we have to guard the Scriptures by defending it against it's enemies. But we do this by the Holy Spirit Who dwells within us. All of our guarding of this treasure (whether it is obeying our Biblical convictions... or confronting false teaching) is done with the power of the Holy Spirit.

And notice (please) that Paul was especially concerned about how it was done — about Timothy's attitude — that it be "with faith and love in Christ Jesus." ... How easy it is to become aggressive... belligerent... and contentious... as we defend the faith. Yet Paul indicates that attitude was very important. ... How different church history would have been if the church (through the ages) had defended their convictions with faith and love (rather than fleshiness and war)...! ... The history of Europe would be much different... and the United States would be as well. ... How different the world's opinion of the church would be if this were true today.

Your boat is ready to sail! ... **A Ship in the Harbor is safe indeed... But that isn't what ships are made for!** 1) Recognize your resources 2) Accept your suffering... 3) Remember your calling... 4) Realize your duty... Trust your

true security (God Himself)... and 5) Guard the Word of God (hold to your Biblical convictions - in faith and love.) ... Are you ready to make a courageous stand for Christ...? Here are five principles that are certain to make you courageous.

Our passage today closes with examples of what being ashamed of Christ looks like and an example of not being ashamed of Christ.

2 Tim 1:15-18

The contrast between the faithful and the unfaithful, the strong and the weak, the trustworthy and the unreliable, is striking. *The many in Asia who left Paul* portray the very things Paul had been warning Timothy against — cowardice... shame... self-indulgence... infidelity. ... Onesiphorus (on the other hand) demonstrated the characteristics Paul had been recommending to Timothy — courage... love... self-discipline... boldness... and faithfulness.

What a friend Onesiphorus must have been! ... The way that Paul words this... is that Onesiphorus struggled to find Paul *and paid a dear price* for doing so - **his own life**. ... We cannot be *sure* that he was martyred... but there seem to be clues here. In verse 16 Paul writes: “May the Lord grant mercy to THE HOUSEHOLD of Onesiphorus...” (Onesiphorus doesn’t seem to be present with them any longer... Why didn’t Paul include Onesiphorus in this greeting? And Paul writes as if they are grieving.

Also in verse 18... Paul seems to ask God to honor Onesiphorus as though he has passed into glory (“*may the Lord grant him to find mercy from the Lord on that day!*”) Most theologians believe that Onesiphorus had died in close proximity to Paul writing this letter. Verse 18 appears to be a eulogy

by which Paul places him in God's hands to receive his eternal reward. (If so) it is very likely that Onesiphorus died for his association with Paul.

The merciful and faithful servant (Onesiphorus) illustrates what unashamed... sacrificial service looks like. It is unafraid to look death in the face... and do what is right.

This passage leaves us with the question: Which example are you? Do you line up with Phygelus and Hermogenes (who are ashamed of the gospel)? Are you quick to flee when faithful obedience and boldness are required? Or are you a loyal servant... like Onesiphorus... who works hard to refresh others?

God is looking for a few good "nobodies" — people who know they cannot succeed in serving the Lord in their own strength. These are the people who are able to stand tall and who will unashamedly testify about Jesus. Like Paul they are unashamed of the gospel because (in their weaknesses) they rely on the Holy Spirit. These are the people who join in suffering for the gospel... by the power of God.

Are you ready to make a courageous stand for Christ...? Here are five principles that are certain to make you courageous. 1) Recognize your resources 2) Accept your suffering... 3) Remember your calling... 4) Realize your duty... Trust your true security (God Himself)... and 5) Guard the Word of God (hold to your Biblical convictions.)

A ship in the harbor is safe indeed; but that isn't what ships are built for...