

# An Encouragement to Timothy – Part 2

## Introduction

### a. objectives

1. subject – Paul opens 2 Timothy by encouraging his protégé to fan into flame the gift of God
2. aim – to cause us to grow in assurance, not being ashamed of the gospel in Christ Jesus
3. passage – 2 Timothy 1:1-18

### b. outline

1. Fan the Flame of Faith (2 Timothy 1:1-7)
2. Do Not Be Ashamed of the Gospel (2 Timothy 1:8-14)
3. Guard the Good Deposit (2 Timothy 1:15-18)

### c. opening

1. the **hymn** “*I Know Whom I Have Believed*” (Major Daniel Webster Whittle; c. 1883)
  - a. the refrain is a verbatim quotation (KJV) of the latter half of the sentence of **2 Tim. 1:12b**
  - b. the sentiment expresses the nature of *gospel assurance*, and addresses four (4) questions *that are impossible to answer, yet require us to trust God that he knows the answer*:
    1. why has God chosen *me*, an unworthy sinner, to be loved and redeemed by Christ?
    2. how did the Spirit implant faith within me, and why do I now have peace by believing the Word?
    3. how does the Spirit move convincing men of sin, revealing Jesus and creating faith in him?
    4. when will the Lord return and what will be my end: death or his appearance?
  - c. the refrain addresses these impossible questions with a simple truth (**see below**)
2. the **main point** of the second letter (redux)
  - a. **2 Timothy is a personal call for perseverance in the truth of the gospel in spite of opposition**
  - b. the “pivot” verses (**i.e.** the verses summarizing the theme of the letter) are **2 Tim. 3:12-15**
    1. the prediction (warning) that *persecution was inevitable*, how the attack *would come* (imposters deceiving people), and an encouragement for Timothy to stand firm in the faith *that so many people had taught him along the way*
    2. **2 Timothy is a very relevant letter of encouragement to the church for us to stay faithful to the apostolic message in the midst of great compromise all around us**
3. the **starting point** of the second letter (redux)
  - a. Paul’s *connection* to Timothy – the legacy of faith that Timothy confesses, coming through Paul (first) and (then) from many others around him (**i.e.** family, friends, coworkers, etc.)
  - b. Paul’s *encouragement* to Timothy – to “*fan into flame*” the gift that he possesses, both of understanding of the gospel and the ability to preach and teach it to others
    1. Paul encourages Timothy to see himself rightly
  - c. (**now**) Paul’s *admonition* to Timothy – **to embrace the “offense” of the gospel of Jesus Christ**

## II. Do Not Be Ashamed of the Gospel (2 Timothy 1:8-12)

### Content

#### a. the offense of the gospel (v. 8)

1. key word: “*ashamed*” (**here and v. 12** – bookends) = a self-conscious (emotional) sense of embarrassment or guilt because of one’s actions, characteristics, or (**in this case**) associations
  - a. to emotionally “move away” from something because it brings embarrassment before others
  - b. to purposely “deny” something because it appears *inconsistent* with what others may think or feel
  - c. other N.T. uses of the word (**x11 in x9 verses**):
    1. **Romans 6:21** – the embarrassment over *former sins*, that only produced the fruit of death
      - a. a good sense of shame – seeing former ways of living as shameful and embarrassing
    2. **Romans 1:16** – the embrace of the gospel as the *means* of righteousness for all (**thesis**)
      - a. the belief that the gospel is good, and worthy of support by the church at Rome to the world
    3. **Mark 8:38** – the embarrassment of being *connected to Christ* before a sinful world
 

*“For whoever is ashamed of me and of my words in this adulterous and sinful generation, of him will the Son of Man also be ashamed when he comes in the glory of his Father with the holy angels.”*

      - a. the key idea of Paul **here and in v. 12** = an embarrassment to confess publicly (note “*the testimony*” in **v. 8**) one’s commitment to Christ in the face of sinful responses, rejection, overt opposition, or (even) persecution

- b. **simply**: an unwillingness to *admit openly and without reservation* that one is committed to Christ and his gospel (**i.e.** so that Jesus is “*ashamed*” to admit he knows *them* on the day that all matters of commitment and loyalty are judged [“*when he comes in glory*”])
    - d. some ways that we demonstrate that we are “*ashamed*” of our affiliation with Christ:
      - 1. we avoid speaking of the things of Jesus because we believe our friends or family or coworkers might reject *us* (**i.e.** we are afraid to lose something or someone in doing so)
        - a. **e.g.** Timothy being ashamed to “*suffer*” because he speaks of these things in the world
      - 2. we avoid being associated with believers because we don’t want to be “*identified*” by those around us as “*fundamentalists*” or “*religious nuts*” (**i.e.** we abandon the *true church*)
        - a. **e.g.** Timothy being ashamed of an association with a “*prisoner*” apostle
      - 3. we fail to call out what is (obviously) wrong from the perspective of Scripture and a biblical worldview (**i.e.** we may even defend what is *evil*, and condemn what is *good*)
      - 4. we “*water down*” the definition of Christianity by not properly calling for a robust repentance of sin and a radical, cross-bearing faith (**i.e.** we try to make it “*easier to swallow*”)
        - a. **e.g.** Timothy being ashamed of the full ramifications of his “*testimony*” of faith
  - 2. **Paul encourages Timothy never to be ashamed of the testimony he has received, nor of the suffering that will (inevitably) arise because of it**
    - a. **question**: so, what *is* the message that we should never be ashamed of?
- b. the message of the gospel (vv. 9-12a)**
  - 1. a very long sentence (in English), from **vv. 8-12a**, all flowing from the words “*testimony*” and “*gospel*”
  - 2. “*gospel*” = simply, good news; but, a “*good news*” that is based on something significant
    - a. **i.e.** not just “*Jesus loves me and heaven awaits*” – the fullest sense of what the message contains
    - b. **i.e.** the fundamental reality that no Christian should *ever* be ashamed of – the message which is at the heart of the connection Jesus speaks of in **Mark 8:38**
    - c. Paul will now “*shout*” this message to Timothy (as a reminder!) to exclaim its *fullness*; the scope of his entire ministry *now that he faces his own mortality* (**i.e.** what is needed to face eternity)
  - 3. the elements of this gospel message:
    - a. it is the “*power of God*” – the very power of God *himself* to accomplish his will (**see Rom. 1:16**)
    - b. it is from God who has “*saved us*” – God saving people *from himself*
    - c. it is from God who has “*called us to [with] a holy calling*” – the Spirit drawing us with this message
    - d. it is *not* because of “*our works*” – *never* because he has seen something good in us
    - e. it is because of “*his own purpose*” – because he purposed to save a people within his own decree
    - f. it is because of “*grace*” – his radical choice to give people mercy rather than condemnation
    - g. it includes us “*in Christ*” – by making a specific way of redemption through his own Son
    - h. it includes us “*before the ages began*” – in the Covenant of Redemption within the Godhead
    - i. it has “*now been manifested*” – visible and tangible in the world by the Incarnation of the Son
    - j. it has “*abolished death*” – overcoming every obstacle of sin and death for those included
    - k. it has “*brought life and immortality*” – revealing an entirely different destiny for those included
    - l. it is what Paul was “*appointed*” to – giving his very life to reveal this message to everyone
    - m. it is why Paul “*suffers*” – experiencing the hatred of the world for the very message of life
      - 1. **LOW**: to be ashamed of the gospel is to **deny the power of God** to decree to save a people *for his own good pleasure* by including them in the work of Christ
  - 4. **parenthetical question**: how does anyone *truly know* that he is a member of the elect, of those whose names are written in the Book of Life, of those known by Christ as his own (**John 6:37-40**)?
    - a. **answer #1**: the statement of **vv. 8-12a** *clearly* represents the belief by Paul that the *destiny* of all men *is entirely in the hands of God* – the reprobate will *never accept that truth* (**i.e.** Paul’s conversion *clearly* aligns with this view of his own destiny; the reprobate *resist it forever*)
    - b. **answer #2**: the person who is *able* to believe these things, *desires* for them to be true *about himself or herself*, can only do so because the Spirit has opened his or her heart to believe it (**i.e.** the gospel message *must be* more than just “*Jesus loves me*” in order for it to *trusted in*)
- c. the hope of the gospel (v. 12b)**
  - 1. back to the hymn “*I Know Whom I Have Believed*”
    - a. the refrain is a verbatim quotation of the latter half of the sentence of **2 Tim. 1:12b**
    - b. Paul is not ashamed of the gospel because:
      - 1. he knows “*whom*” he has believed – he has put his faith *in the faithful One*
      - 2. he is “*convinced*” that this Christ will “*guard ... what has been entrusted to me*” – he is convinced Christ will hold him fast *in his converted state through faith*
      - 3. he is confident that this will last “*until that Day*” – he is confident that this state of grace will continue until the Judgment Day arrives and he is *vindicated* before the Father by the Son

- c. the sentiment expresses the nature of Paul's **assurance**:
  - 1. no one knows why God chose *any of us* to be included in the love of Christ, especially given that we are unworthy sinners, *but we can be confident that he will!*
  - 2. no one knows how the Spirit implants faith within us, or why we now have peace by believing the Word, *but we can now understand the things of God revealed in that Word!*
  - 3. no one knows how the Spirit moves convincing men of sin, revealing Jesus and creating faith in him, *but we can see the results of it in our hatred of sin and desire to be holy!*
  - 4. no one knows when the Lord will return and whether we will die first or survive until his Second Coming, *but we can be confident that the eternity that awaits us will be a glorious one!*
- d. the phrase addresses these (impossible) questions with a simple truth: I know whom I have trusted with all of this, and am convinced that his power is great enough to hold me fast until the day of judgment – **this is the testimony of Paul before his fate arrives**
- 2. **is this assurance your assurance – is this your testimony of the gospel, or are you ashamed to stand before the world and proclaim your loyalty to this Jesus and what he has done?**
  - a. **remember: your answer to this question determines Jesus' answer re: you!**