

Unashamed of the Gospel **(2 Timothy 1:8-12)**

Life's most embarrassing moments—we tend to recoil when we think about those misspoken words or mistaken actions. We're ashamed of ourselves for such things and seek desperately to hide from them. Could the same be said of our faith in Jesus Christ? Are we embarrassed to be associated with a crucified Savior? Are we ashamed at times of the gospel? If we've ever shrunk from honestly owning Jesus Christ we know what it's like to be ashamed of the gospel. Fear, uncertainty, or a desire to fit in with others may have prompted us to hide Jesus away. Paul warned Timothy not to be ashamed of the gospel. After all, there's nothing to be ashamed of when it comes to Jesus. The God of the gospel is full of power and grace. It's through the gospel that we enter into salvation. It's through the gospel that we enjoy abundant and endless life. We need never be ashamed about Jesus in our lives. Paul presents plenty of reasons for standing up for the gospel.

**Don't be ashamed of the gospel—
you can rely on God's power to sustain you (1:8).**

God's power pervades the gospel message, and His power sustains and protects us when we uphold the good news about Jesus Christ.

We need never be ashamed of the message about Jesus Christ (1:8a).

Having reminded Timothy that God doesn't give us a spirit of fear (verse 7), Paul goes on to say that we, therefore, do not need to be in any way ashamed of our faith. Paul doesn't imply that Timothy was ashamed—the verb form of “do not be ashamed” merely warns against the possibility of becoming ashamed. Timothy was a strong Christian leader, but like all of us he was susceptible to shrinking from intense opposition. Paul warned Timothy not to be ashamed of the “testimony” of Jesus, possibly referring to the words Jesus taught but more likely referring to the message about Jesus—the gospel (compare 1 Corinthians 1:6). The testimony about Jesus is the good news about His saving death and resurrection. Through faith in this gospel we receive Jesus as “our Lord,” a phrase Paul uses to identify himself both with Timothy and with Jesus Christ. Since we share a common faith and a common Lord we shouldn't be ashamed of each other. Even though Paul was a prisoner (a word that implies a chained prisoner) he expected Timothy to stand by him without embarrassment. We need never be ashamed of the gospel or those who proclaim its life changing message.

God's power enables us to share in the hardships related to the gospel (1:8b).

Rather than avoid Paul in his imprisonment and impending trial, Timothy was expected to share in Paul's hardships for the sake of the gospel. Paul seems to have coined a term by combining three words—suffer . . . bad . . . with. Paul asked Timothy to suffer hardship with him. But that suffering would not be void of God's power. In fact, God's power would be evident in those times of hardship. We can depend on God to give us the power we need to stand up for Him even in the face of dire circumstances. His power will sustain us—we need not be ashamed.

**Don't be ashamed of the gospel—
you can rely on God's grace to save you (1:9-11).**

Christians not only have access to God's power but also are recipients of His grace. His grace saves us, securing us in an eternal relationship with Him. Therefore, the good news of Jesus should never be an embarrassment to God's people.

God's grace, in contrast to our human efforts, has saved us (1:9a).

Verses 8-11 form one continuous sentence in the original Greek. Having mentioned the power of God, Paul goes on to describe God's saving grace. It is God who has saved us, that is, rescued us from a place of dire danger and moved us to a position of security and safety. In doing so, God has "called us with a holy calling," meaning that God has saved us so that we can live transformed, holy lives. This saving and transforming work of God is based purely on His grace in contrast to our own efforts. Salvation isn't "according to our works," since our feeble efforts to replace sin with holiness fail miserably. Instead, our salvation rests firmly on God's purpose and grace. It's God's purpose to save, and it's His grace that reaches out to lost sinners. We're saved by grace. Therefore, we need not be ashamed of this grace-based gospel.

God's grace, revealed in Jesus Christ, replaces death with life through the gospel (1:9b-10).

The grace of God became evident in the gift of His Son. God granted us His grace through Jesus Christ. This gift of grace took place in the mind of God "before times eternal" (compare Ephesians 1:4). Planned for all eternity past, the gift of God's grace has now been made manifest (revealed) through "the appearance of our Savior, Christ Jesus." The word "appearance" often refers to Jesus' future return, but here it looks back to Jesus' incarnation and earthly ministry. Jesus Christ, the One who saves us, appeared by taking on a sinless human nature, living a sinless life, dying for human sin, and rising from the dead in victory over sin. Through His redemptive work, Jesus Christ destroyed, that is rendered inactive, death itself

(compare 1 Corinthians 15:26). Death no longer holds sway over the followers of Jesus Christ. It's lost its sting, its dread, its finality due to the life that we have in Jesus. In place of death, Jesus Christ brought to light both life and immortality. This unending life is ours through the gospel, the good news about Jesus' redemptive work. God's grace has been revealed in Jesus Christ and replaces death with life. We need not be ashamed of such a life giving gospel.

God's grace, as seen in the experience of others, invites us to proclaim the gospel (1:11).

At this point in this running sentence Paul interjects his personal association with this life giving, grace-based gospel. To that gospel Paul was appointed a "herald," an "apostle," and a "teacher." A herald proclaims a message. An apostle proclaims that message as one sent with authority. A teacher explains the message, repeatedly when necessary, bringing its full meaning to light. Paul basked in the privilege of being a herald, an apostle, and a teacher of the good news about Jesus Christ and His redemptive work. To be imprisoned for this gospel was no embarrassment to him. We need not be ashamed of the gospel, and we can take courage by seeing how others have boldly presented its truths. After all, it's the gospel that proclaims the saving grace of God.

**Don't be ashamed of the gospel—
you can rely on God's Son to shelter you (1:12).**

It may seem like a simple matter to encourage others not to be ashamed of the gospel. But Paul spoke with passionate experience. While he wrote these exhortations he was suffering imprisonment and anticipating execution. Nevertheless, he refused to be ashamed of the gospel. He knew that Jesus would guard him.

We may be called on to suffer for the gospel of Jesus Christ (1:12a).

Paul stated boldly, "I am suffering for these things," the things related to the gospel of Jesus Christ, "but I am not ashamed." Paul saw no reason to let suffering hinder his enthusiasm for the gospel. Christians through the centuries have been called on to suffer for their faith, and we may suffer for the gospel ourselves in various ways. But no amount of rejection, ridicule, or persecution should drive us to be ashamed of Jesus Christ in our lives.

We need never be ashamed of the gospel because of our relationship with Jesus Christ (1:12b).

In a crescendo of praise, Paul declared, "For I know whom I have believed!" Paul's faith wasn't simply a belief in a set of principles or ideas. His faith was a confident trust in a person,

Jesus Christ. Paul knew Jesus. Paul trusted Jesus. Paul had a settled confidence in the One in whom he had placed his faith. It's our relationship with Jesus Christ that gives us confidence to withstand opposition and remain unashamed of the gospel.

We need never be ashamed of the gospel because of the protective power of Jesus Christ (1:12c).

Because Paul knew Jesus, because he had placed his faith in the Savior, he could express great confidence in Jesus' protecting power. Paul declared, "I am persuaded that he is able to guard my deposit unto that day." Paul was absolutely confident that Jesus wouldn't let him down. The Lord would guard, shelter, protect until the end. Paul refers to his "deposit." He may have had in mind that which had been deposited into his life by Jesus, that is, his responsibility to advance the gospel throughout the world. However, it seems preferable to view Paul's "deposit" as what he had placed in the hands of Jesus Christ for safe keeping, that is, his own salvation and rewards for committed service. Paul refers to this deposit as "my" rather than Christ's, and indicates that Jesus Christ will guard this deposit rather than Paul needing to guard it. In verse 14 Paul will refer to a deposit that Timothy had received—the responsibility of sharing the gospel, a responsibility that Timothy would have to guard. However, in verse 12 Paul seems to be referring to his own deposit with Jesus Christ, the anticipation of his future reward that the Lord would guard "unto that day," the future day on which Paul would enter into the eternal presence of God. Jesus would shelter Paul, protecting his salvation and his rewards right into eternity. We need not be ashamed of the gospel because Jesus Christ will shelter our salvation and rewards "unto that day." We need never be ashamed about Jesus in our lives.