

A LETTER TO A YOUNG PREACHER

By Henry T. Mahan

2Timothy 1:8-12

TV-481a / May 29, 1994

Henry Mahan T. Tape Library
Zebulon Baptist Church
6088 Zebulon Highway
Pikeville, KY 41501

If you would like to follow as I read the scriptures, I'd like for you to turn to **Second Timothy 1:8**. Now the title of this message is: **A LETTER TO A YOUNG PREACHER**. You might call it excerpts from a letter to a young pastor. This is one of my favorite passages of scripture. Now, the apostle Paul was in prison, in Rome, and he was in prison for preaching the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. Paul did not call himself the prisoner of the Roman Empire, or the prisoner of Nero, or the prisoner of the religious leaders. He called himself the "*Prisoner of the Lord Jesus Christ*." Paul knew that these experiences through which the Lord was taking him was for the glory of God and for the good of His people.

He talked about, over in the **Second Chapter** of this same epistle, how that he was in jail, in bonds and fetters, but the Word of God was not bound. He said, "*I endure these things for the elect's sake.*" That's why I'm here; I'm here for the glory of God and I'm here for the good of God's people. So, even in prison he was not defeated and he was not discouraged. He said, "*I'm cast down, but I'm not destroyed; I'm perplexed but not in despair because I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, to be content.*"

I'm content with beholding His face
My all to His pleasure resign
And no changes of season or place,
Would make any change in my mind.
While blest with a sense of God's love
A palace, a toy would appear
And prisons would palaces prove
If Jesus would dwell with me there.

So, the apostle Paul is in prison and he's writing a letter, an epistle to a young preacher, a young pastor by the name of Timothy. Paul called him his "*son in the ministry*." Paul has some instructions for this young man and I want you to go with me to **verse 8, Second Timothy Chapter 1, verse 8**. The first thing that Paul says to young Timothy is this, he says, "Now Timothy, don't you be ashamed of the gospel of our Lord, don't you be

A LETTER TO A YOUNG PREACHER
II Timothy 1:8-12 — TV Sermon 481a

ashamed of the testimony (when he uses the word testimony, he means the gospel,) don't you be ashamed of the gospel of God's grace and God's mercy in Christ Jesus."

It's offensive to the natural man; in fact, Paul uses two words to describe the response of the average person to the gospel. There are two words; one of them is in **First Corinthians**, and the other in **the Book of Galatians**. There are two words that describe the response of the natural man to the gospel, even the religious man. The first word is, foolishness, (sheer nonsense). Paul said, "*The preaching of the gospel of the cross of Jesus Christ is to those who are perishing, foolishness,*" (sheer nonsense). They see no beauty in it, they see no glory in the cross, and they see no need of the cross. So, to them it is foolishness.

The other word that Paul uses to describe the response of a natural man to the gospel of Christ is the word "*offensive*." It's not only foolishness to him, but it is offensive. I'll tell you this, when you tell a man that he's a sinner, it's offensive. It offends his dignity. He will get highly offended if you tell him he's a sinner. He'll tell you something like, "Oh, we've all sinned, none of us are perfect," but he doesn't mean himself, he means you. You tell him what the Word of God says about him, "*All have sinned and come short of the glory of God; man in his best state is all together vanity.*" You tell him that from the soul of his feet to the top of his head that there's nothing in him that will please a Holy God; he'll be offended. You've offended his dignity, but that is what the gospel says.

He not only tells us who God is, the gospel tells us who we are. Then, when you tell a man that the gospel must be revealed and "*the natural man receiveth not the things of God because they are spiritually discerned,*" and he's not a spiritual creature, he doesn't have a spiritual mind or heart, and you tell him these things must be revealed by the Spirit of God, that will offend him. It offends his wisdom. He thinks he knows everything.

Now, if you tell a man that salvation is by grace alone, not by works, not by merit, not by duties, and not by religious ceremonies, that salvation is by the grace of God and grace alone, then you have offended his pride. That's offensive! When you preach the Lordship of Jesus Christ, as our Lord said to the rich young ruler, "*Sell what you have and give it to the people that need it and you come and take your cross and follow me,*" (bow to my authority, bow to the Lordship of Christ, count your life and possessions as nothing, and that Christ is all and in all), that's offensive! It offends a man's love for the world.

So, Paul tells Timothy, "*Don't you be ashamed of the gospel of our Lord,*" even though it is offensive to the natural man and nonsense to those that are perishing. "*It's the power of God and the wisdom of God, to those who believe.*"

And then he says this; watch this carefully! "*Do not be ashamed of me, his prisoner,*" in other words, don't be ashamed of the Gospel; now stay with me, and don't be ashamed to be identified with others who believe the gospel with the prophets of the Word of God. These faithful men who wrote the scriptures with the apostles and Jesus Christ, don't be ashamed of those who gave their lives for the gospel. Don't be ashamed of the apostles; don't be ashamed of the Reformers who continued in their day to preach the gospel of God's grace in Christ Jesus. Don't be ashamed of the faithful men and women in your day

A LETTER TO A YOUNG PREACHER
II Timothy 1:8-12 — TV Sermon 481a

who preach the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ. That's one of the ways that we confess Christ. That's one way that we confess Christ, it's to be identified with the people of God. If we love Him, then we love those that are begotten of him, isn't that right?

You know, it's always been popular to brag on dead preachers and find fault with living preachers. Oh, it's so easy to talk about how great Moses was, and how great Abraham was, and how great Calvin, Luther, Spurgeon, Whitfield and Knox, and all these other men were, and then find fault with those who preach what they preached. So, don't be ashamed of the gospel Timothy, don't be ashamed. Don't be ashamed of those who suffer for the gospel, those who preach the gospel, those who are in prison because of the gospel, to those who in your day proclaimed the glory of God, don't be ashamed of them, be identified with them.

Watch the **third** thing he says in **verse 8**, "*But be thou a partaker of the afflictions of the gospel.*" You take your place on the battlefield, on the front lines, identified with Christ. Something interesting occurred to me as I read this scripture today and was preparing this message. If you are a believer, I address myself and you and everyone listening, if you are a believer, how can you be such close friends with people that hate God, who hate the gospel? How can that be? How can you be such good friends with people who speak evil of God's Word, and who speak evil of God's preacher? How can they maintain close fellowship with you, when they despise those who preach the gospel?

How is it that Paul is in jail for preaching the gospel and the same people speak well of you that put him in jail? That ought not to be. Our Lord said, "*Woe unto you when all men speak well of you, but be thou a partaker of the afflictions of the gospel.*" In other words, Paul is saying, "Timothy, take a stand, take a firm stand for the gospel. Take a stand that will identify you with Christ and with His gospel and with His people and with His sufferings and with His cross and with His atonement. If the world hates you because of your stand for the gospel, remember that the world hated the Lord for His stand too."

Christ said, in **John 15:18-19**, "*If the world hate you, ye know that it hated me before it hated you. If ye were of the world, the world would love his own: but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you.*"

Paul says in the **Book of Romans**, "I'm a debtor to all who have gone before." I'm a debtor to the prophets of the Old Testament, I'm a debtor to the apostles who gave their lives for the gospel, I'm a debtor to the Reformers who wrote the great catechisms of confessions of faith, I'm a debtor to the man who preached the gospel to me, and I'm a debtor to every believer. I'm a debtor to you to preach the truth to you, not to compromise the truth, but to declare unto you the truth of God. I'm a debtor to you to keep your trust, to be honest with you in my dealings and business dealings and in my preaching and in my life and all these other things, because, "*I am not ashamed of the gospel Christ, it's the power of God unto salvation to everyone that believeth, to the Jew first and also to the Greek.*"

A LETTER TO A YOUNG PREACHER
II Timothy 1:8-12 – TV Sermon 481a

Now, look **at verse 9**. I told you this was one of my favorite scriptures. Here's the reason for our confidence; and our reason for the willingness to bear whatever reproach, it doesn't matter, whatever affliction we are called upon to bear, whatever reproach, whatever suffering we are called on to endure, it doesn't matter. Do you know why? Look at **verse 9**, "*God hath saved us.*" How can you be ashamed of one who saves you? How can you be ashamed of Him who suffered and died for you? "*Christ hath suffered for sin, the just for the unjust to bring us to God.*" How can I be ashamed of Him?

You know, I go over, a lot of times to the **Book of Isaiah, chapter 53** and read verses **4 through 6**, talking about the death of our Lord, the sacrifice of our Redeemer. It says, "*He was wounded for our transgressions, bruised for our iniquities,*" (and I'll put my name in there). "*He was wounded for*" (Henry's transgressions), "*He was bruised for*" (Henry's iniquities), "*the chastisement of*" (Henry's peace), "*was laid upon Him and by His stripes,*" (Henry's healed.) By His stripes, I'm healed. Put your name in there. Be ashamed of Him? Why, He saved us!

Ashamed of Jesus, that dear friend
On whom my hope of heaven depends,
No, when I blush, be this my shame
That I no more revere His name.
Ashamed of Jesus, yes I may
When I've no guilt to wash away,
When I've no tear to wipe, no good to crave
No fear to quell, no soul to save.
Until then, nor is my boasting vain
Till then I'll boast a Saviour slain,
And oh may this, my glory be
That He is not ashamed of me.

Timothy, don't be ashamed of the gospel, don't be ashamed of me, His servant. Take a stand, be thou willing to take a stand for the gospel! Why? Because, "*He saved us, He delivered us and He hath called us with a Holy calling, not according to our works, but according to His own purpose and grace which was given us before the world began.*" How long has God thought on us? It was before the foundation of the world. He saved us! Salvation is of the Lord. He sent His Son into this world to deliver us from the power of sin, from the penalty of sin, from the presence of sin, and from the practice of sin. The Son came and died for us. He exalted Him, accepted us in the beloved, He saved us!

One day, He called us by His Holy Spirit and said, "*You didn't choose me, I chose you.*" You didn't seek me; I sought you. He sent His Spirit and "*called us out of darkness and translated us into the kingdom of God's dear Son.*" This salvation and this calling was not according to our works. I want you to hear me now! Salvation is not by works. It doesn't rest upon works; it doesn't depend upon works, neither before faith nor after faith. Salvation is not by works, either before I believed or after I believed. "*It's not by works of righteousness which we have done, but it's according to His mercy that He saved us,*

A LETTER TO A YOUNG PREACHER
II Timothy 1:8-12 – TV Sermon 481a

according to His own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before this world began.”

My friends, *“I am what I am by the grace of God.”* That’s always been true and always will be. I know what I know by the grace of God. I have what I have by the grace of God. *“Who maketh thee to differ,”* said Paul. *“What do you have that you didn’t receive?”* *“Now, if you received it, why do you glory as if you didn’t receive it? A man can receive nothing unless it be given him from above. For every good gift and perfect gift cometh from our God.”*

We sing it; do we believe it? *“Amazing grace, (wonderful grace, sovereign grace, redeeming grace, eternal grace), how sweet the sound that saved a wretch like me. (Wretches don’t work; wretches don’t merit anything, wretches do not deserve anything); that saved a wretch like me,”* (I was lost, who found whom)? *“I was lost but now I’m found, I was blind but now I see. Twas grace that taught my heart to fear. It was grace my fears relieved. How precious did that grace appear in the hour I first believed. Through many dangers, toils and snares, I’ve already come. It’s grace that’s brought me safe this far, (not works, grace); and grace will lead me home.”* *“He saved me; He called me with a Holy calling, not according to my works, but according to His own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ before the world, began.”*

That old hymn writer said, *“Here I raise mine Ebenezer.”* Do you know what the word Ebenezer means? It means what it says in the next line; *“hither by thy help I’m come”* that’s what Ebenezer means. I got here by the grace of God. *“Here I raise mine Ebenezer, hither to this point, by grace I came. I hope by thy good pleasure, safely to arrive at home.”*

Oh my, don’t be ashamed. He saves you; He calls you. *“It’s not according to your works, but according to His own purpose and His grace, (given, not sold), given to us in Christ Jesus before the world began, but is now, made manifest by the appearing of our Saviour Jesus Christ.”* There’s first the promise then the fulfillment. There’s first the purpose and then the revelation. His purpose and grace was given to us in Christ before the world began, and the promise and the purpose and the grace was fulfilled when He came.

John the Baptist said there He is, *“behold the Lamb of God.”* Christ was the Lamb slain before the foundation of the world, but is now made manifest in person, and is the incarnate.

Hebrews Chapter 10: Did you ever study that chapter? Our Lord is talking about the Father and the sacrifices of the Old Testament. There’s Abel’s lamb, and Abraham’s lamb, the Passover lamb, and the millions and millions of lambs that were slain. There were bulls and goats and turtledoves and heifers, and all these blood sacrifices. God said, in **Hebrews 10**, *“Sacrifice and offering thou wouldest not, neither had any pleasure therein.”* In other words, those sacrifices never gave God satisfaction. The blood of bulls and goats could never take away sin. The Almighty God, the Holy God of heaven and earth, never found any satisfaction in the blood of an animal, but those sacrifices pointed to Christ the Lamb of God who would fulfill them all. By His precious blood, He put away our sin. And he

A LETTER TO A YOUNG PREACHER
II Timothy 1:8-12 – TV Sermon 481a

said, “*Lo I come!*” Now, these sacrifices never brought God any satisfaction, never fulfilled or accomplished our salvation.

But, it is written in the Bible, in the book of **Revelation, Chapter 5**: John said, “*And I saw in the right hand of him that sat on the throne a book written within and on the backside, sealed with seven seals. And I saw a strong angel proclaiming with a loud voice, Who is worthy to open the book, and to loose the seals thereof? And no man in heaven, nor in earth, neither under the earth, was able to open the book, neither to look thereon. And I wept much, because no man was found worthy to open and to read the book, neither to look thereon. And one of the elders saith unto me, Weep not: behold, the Lion of the tribe of Juda, the Root of David, hath prevailed to open the book, and to loose the seven seals thereof... And he came and took the book out of the right hand of him that sat upon the throne.*” That’s Christ!

“*Lo I come in the volume of the Book, it is written of Me to do thy will O God, by the which will we are sanctified once for all by the offering of the body of Jesus Christ the Lord.*” Oh, did you hear that? “*He saved us, He called us with a Holy calling, not according to our works, but according to His own purpose and grace which was given us before the world began, but is now manifested by the appearing, (the incarnation, by the life and death of our great Saviour Jesus Christ), who hath abolished death.*”

Christ abolished death; what’s that talking about? I’ve got to die some day unless the Lord comes soon. I’m in the sunset years, some of you are too, and it’s all right. “*It’s appointed unto men once to die,*” but He’s abolished death, not that kind of death, not physical death. We’ve all got to die physically. But what has He abolished? “*The soul that sinneth shall surely die.*” Oh no, that death has been abolished. “*Sin when it is finished, bringeth forth death.*” Oh no, not in Christ. “*He that believeth on Me will never die.*” The scripture says, “*They’ll be cast into the lake of fire, this is the second death.*” That’s the one He abolished for His people, for every believer. He abolished death for every believer and “*He brought life and immortality to light. This mortality shall put on immortality. This corruptible shall put on incorruption.*” This dishonor shall be made glorious. This weakness shall be made strong and this unholy shall be made holy because He hath appointed, He hath abolished death and brought back to life and immortality for every believer.

All right, **verse 11**: “*Whereunto I am appointed a preacher, I’m appointed an apostle, I’m appointed a teacher of this gospel.*” Paul said, “Timothy, you are too, you’re a preacher, and you’re a teacher of this gospel.” We preach the gospel! “*If I preach the gospel, I have nothing to glory of, necessity is laid upon me, woe is unto me if I preach not the gospel.*” I’ll say this; we preach the gospel as it is, to men as they are. When Paul took his leave of the elders at Ephesus, and he was going up to Rome where he would be put in prison. (This is where he was when he wrote this epistle). When he was leaving these dear friends, he told them, he said, “*I’ve served the Lord among you in humility of mind and I’ve kept back nothing profitable to you, I’m not shunned to declare unto you the whole council of God. I’ve not coveted any man’s silver or gold. Now, I’m leaving you and you will never*

A LETTER TO A YOUNG PREACHER
II Timothy 1:8-12 – TV Sermon 481a

see my face again, but I commend you to the gospel, to the Word of God and to the living God.”

Oh, that you and I, this preacher and everybody listening to my voice might have that clear conscience in regard to our ministry, in regard to our message, in regard to our methods, in regard to our means, in regard to our motives, in regard to our manners, I've kept back nothing profitable. *“I've not shunned to preach the whole council of God and I've coveted no man's silver or gold and for the which cause I suffer these things.”*

Why was Paul in prison, for disturbing the peace? He disturbed their false peace, I'll tell you that. The religious people came saying, “peace, peace, when there is no peace.” Paul came preaching the peace that Christ bought by His precious blood, and He disturbed their false peace. He wasn't there for a misdemeanor; He wasn't there for a crime, he was there for preaching the gospel.

(Tulip), total depravity, unconditional election, limited atonement, invincible grace, perseverance of the saints; it's what Christ did, and why Christ died, and where Christ is now. These men were not ashamed of the gospel.

I'm not ashamed of Him Paul said, “I'm not ashamed of you, Timothy, I'm not ashamed of the gospel, I'm not ashamed of the Word of God, I'm not ashamed of the truth, I'm not ashamed of the grace of God, I'm not ashamed of the blood of Christ, and I'm not ashamed of His righteousness” because, listen to the last verse, **verse 12**, *I know whom I have believed, I know Him and I'm persuaded that He's able to keep that which I've committed to him against that day.”* That's what motivates me, Him. *“Whom to know is life eternal.”*

Back in the days when Christians were being martyred, they brought a dear woman who was a believer to be burned at the stake. Before they tied her to the stake and lit the fire, they said, “Recant and you'll live.” She said, “I didn't come here to deny my Lord, I didn't come here to deny my Lord.”

And, I didn't come here today to deny my Lord. *“Do not be ashamed of the testimony of our Lord.”*