

The Testimony of our Lord

By Henry Mahan

Bible Text: 2 Timothy 1:12

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Now I have a very familiar verse of Scripture that I shall use as my text today, very familiar. You have heard it many, many times. It is found in 2 Timothy chapter one verse 12. The apostle Paul says, “Nevertheless, I am not ashamed. I am not ashamed for I know whom I have believed.”

Now notice he didn't say, “I know in whom.” He said, “I know whom. I know him. I believe him. I love him. I know whom I have believed and I am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day, that day of judgment, that day of wrath, that day of our Lord, against that day.”

Now when Paul wrote this, 2 Timothy chapter one, the first and second epistle of Timothy he was in prison down in Rome and he was writing these epistles to his son, young son in the ministry, young Timothy. Now this epistle, like all the other epistles, some are addressed to individuals. Some are addressed to like Philemon. Some are addressed to churches like the church at Galatia and Ephesus and Thessalonica. This epistle, one and two, is addressed to Timothy. But the Holy Spirit dictated these epistles.

You see, the Scriptures are God breathed. Holy men spake as they were moved by the Holy Spirit to write the Scriptures and when Paul is writing this epistle to Timothy he is writing it to you and to me and to all believes. All Scripture is given by inspiration of God all Scripture is profitable for correction, for rebuke, for reproof, for instruction in righteousness.

Now so I am going to back up a little bit. Now that is my text, verse 12. “I know whom I have believed and I am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed to him against that day.”

But let's back up a little bit. I always tell you if you want to know what a verse means find out what is said before hand, what is said before that verse and after that verse. Don't just read through the Bible and take out a verse and say, “This is what that means.” See what the apostle says before he writes that particular verse.

And back in verse seven, back in verse seven Paul says to Timothy, “Now, Timothy, God has not given us a spirit of fear. God had not given us a spirit of fear. God has given us a spirit of power, his power, not ours, his power. And he has given us a spirit of love, love

for him and love for others. We preach this gospel in love. We walk in truth and love. Love is the crowning evidence and mark of a redeemed man. By this shall all men know that you are my disciples if you love one another. God has given us not a spirit of fear, but he has given us a spirit of power and a spirit of love and a sound mind.

Now what does that mean God has given us a sound mind? It means just this. He has taught us the wisdom of Christ. The Son of God hath come and given us an understanding that we may know him that is true. This is the true God and this is eternal life. This is his Son. And Christ is our wisdom and God has given to us, we didn't earn it, merit, buy it, work for it. He has given us not a spirit of fear. We don't fear the flesh. We don't fear men. Our Lord said to his disciples one time. He said, "Don't fear men who are able to kill your body and after that no more that they can do. Fear God. Fear God."

So we don't fear men. God hasn't given us a spirit of fear. We are not seeking to please men. We are trying to please God. Paul said, "If I please men I am not the servant of God." If I am going to bow and cater and cringe before the opinions of men I can't be God's servant. I have got to be God's servant first. And whatever men feel about what we preach, that's fine, you know. But God didn't give us a spirit of fear, but a spirit of power. The power is his. The power is in his gospel. The gospel is the power of God, not in me or you. It is in what we preach. It is whom we preach and the spirit of love and a spirit of a sound mind.

All right look at verse eight. And in verse eight Timothy...Paul charges Timothy with three things. And he says, "Timothy, God hasn't given us a spirit of fear, but a spirit of power, love and wisdom, a sound mind."

Now here is three things I am going to tell you. Don't be ashamed of the testimony of our Lord. That is what...that is the title of this message, "The Testimony of our Lord." Don't you be ashamed of the testimony of our Lord. Don't be ashamed of the gospel of Jesus Christ.

Oh, I know it is foolishness to the wise. It is a pack of foolishness. It is sheer nonsense. I know that. I know it is a stumbling block to the self righteous and to the religious. He said their table is a stumbling block and a snare. And I know it is an offense to the world. When you call men sinners you offend their dignity. And when you preach a salvation by grace alone you offend their pride and the cross is offensive.

But I will tell you this. It is the power of God unto salvation to those who believe. And to those who believe the gospel is not foolishness. It is not offensive. It is not a stumbling block. It is the power and the wisdom of God.

I see in Christ Jesus and his person and work, his righteousness and death, his resurrection and exaltation, I see how a holy God can be just and justify me and you. I do. I see the wisdom of God in Christ. I see the power of God in Christ. And then Paul, the second thing he said, "Don't be ashamed of the gospel. Don't be ashamed of the testimony of our Lord. And listen. Don't be ashamed of me his prisoner."

My friends, don't be ashamed to be identified with the Lord's people. They are the finest people on earth. Don't be ashamed of the Lord's people, believing people. They may be poor. They may be weak. They may be despised. Paul was despised. He was in prison when he wrote this. And he tells young Timothy, "Don't be ashamed of the gospel and don't be ashamed of God's people. Don't be ashamed to be identified with them."

You know Moses. The Scriptures say Moses refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures of Egypt. I would rather be numbered among the people of God than to reign with the profane.

David said, "I would rather be a door keeper, a janitor in the house of the Lord than dwell in the tents of the wicked." That's right. No matter how weak and poor and frail God's people are, don't be ashamed of them.

I just came back from a little country called Belarus over by Poland where I preached to some farm people, country people, plain, simple people. But I tell you how happy I was, how much I felt at home among them, how I loved them. They embraced me and kissed me on each cheek and I just felt so blessed to be...to have the privilege of being a part of their family and to worship with them. I tell you they are the...God's people of precious people wherever you find them.

He said, "Don't be ashamed of the testimony of our Lord and don't be ashamed of me, the prisoner of the Lord or the people of God."

And look at the third thing that he said. "Timothy, be thou, be thou a partaker of the affliction of the gospel. Be identified and when the arrows start flying against the people of God you be willing to take your share of the blame and the rebuke." And there are folks who want the benefits of the gospel, but not the harassment. Now that's just right. That's just a fact. That's just a fact. There are people who want the benefits of the doctrine of the gospel, of the cross, of the blood of salvation, but they don't want to bear the affliction and the harassment that comes with it.

I have been around folks like that. They will let their pastor bear the slight. And they will let their pastor be made fun of. And they will let their pastor and some of the deacons bear the shame, but they stand back. They stand back from involvement. They don't get involved in the harassment and the shame and the slight and the fun that is poked at people who are believers.

I am telling you this. Christ said, "If you are ashamed of me in this sinful and adulterous generation, I will be ashamed of you when I come with the holy angels. You confess me before men. I will confess you before the Father."

So I am telling you this is what Paul says to Timothy. "Now, Timothy, God hasn't given us the Spirit of fear. We are not afraid." He has given us the spirit of power and love and

wisdom. And don't you be ashamed of the gospel. And don't you be ashamed of the poor, weak people of God. They are the salt of the earth."

God hath chosen the foolish things to confound the wise. God hath chosen the weak things to bring to naught the mighty things. God hath chosen the things that are abased and despised. Yea, hath God chosen that no flesh should glory in his presence.

You stand up. You stand up and be ready to be a partaker of the afflictions of the gospel.

Now in verse nine here is that gospel. Here is that offensive gospel. Here is that foolishness that they call foolishness. Here is the testimony of our Lord in verse nine. Do you see it? "He hath saved us." He saved us. Salvation is of the Lord. Salvation is not something I do for God. It is something God does for me. Salvation is not a cooperative effort between me and the most holy God. Salvation is a gift.

The wages of sin is death. I have earned that. That is what is due me. But the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord. Salvation is a gift. He saved us.

I hear people say, "Well, I got saved."

I didn't. The Lord saved me. I didn't get saved. It wasn't an accident. He did it on purpose.

You see the two words that sum up this gospel. You learn them. It is the word substitution and satisfaction. Jesus Christ took my place. He took my place. He took my guilt. He died in my place, in my room, in my stead. He is my substitute. The wrath of God due unto me fell on him. He paid a debt he didn't owe. I owed a debt I couldn't pay. He paid it. He paid it in my place, in my stead.

Do you see that? Substitution.

You fellows that play football or basketball, you know what a substitute is. It is a fellow that takes your place. And if he takes your place you come out. You come out. And Christ came down here and took my place. And the word satisfaction is he got the job done. He satisfied the law. He satisfied the justice of God. He kept the law perfectly. He paid the sin debt perfectly. It is finished. That is what he said.

You see, almighty God never had any satisfaction with the sacrifices of Moses and Aaron and all these fellows in the Old Testament. Those were pictures. Those were types. Those were examples. Christ came, you see. He paid the debt and God said, "This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased."

And with one sacrifice he perfected forever them that are sanctified.

All right. He saved us. He saved us.

All right. And he called us. He called us by his Spirit. You see the Father sent the Son into the world. And the Son came into the world and finished the work God gave him to do. And the Holy Spirit calls us to Christ.

In 2 Thessalonians chapter two verse 13 Paul writing to the church at Thessalonica said, “We are bound to give thanks for you, brethren, beloved of the Lord, because God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth whereunto he called you by our gospel. He called you. He called you by our gospel.”

The Spirit of God calls us. He calls us by his gospel to the obtaining of the glory of Jesus Christ. And I will tell you this, that gift of life is not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace given us in Christ before the world began. Do you see that verse? Verse nine. Here it is. Here is the gospel. He saved us. He called us with a holy calling, not according to our works, not because of our works, not based on our works, but according to his own purpose and grace which was given to us in Christ before the world began.

Paul summed it up. He said, “It is not of him that willeth. It is not of him that runneth. It is of God that showeth mercy.”

One day Moses said, “Lord, show me your glory.” And the Lord said, “All right, Moses. I will cause all my goodness to pass before you. Here is my glory. It is my goodness. Here is my glory. It is my mercy. Here is my glory. It is my grace to undeserving sinners.” He said, “I will cause it to pass before you. I will be merciful to whom I will be merciful. I will be gracious to whom I will be gracious.”

He called us. We are born not of blood, not of the will of the flesh, not of the will of man. WE are born of God.

Paul said to Titus, “It is not by works of righteousness which we have done, it is according to his mercy he saved us.

That’s that gospel. Don’t be ashamed of it.

I’ll tell you this. If a man is ever saved, God will have to save him. If a man is ever kept God will have to keep him. If a man is ever raised from the dead God will have to raise him. If a man is ever presented faultless and holy before the throne of God, then God will have to do it. If a man is ever conformed to the image of Christ God will have to do it. What are you going to do about it? He saved us. He called us.

Whom he foreknew, then he predestinated to be conformed to the image of his Son. And whom he predestinated, he called. And whom he called, he justified. And whom he justified, he glorified. What shall we say to these things?

I tell you what I say. If God be for me, who can be against me? If God spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him freely give us all things? Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died.

All right, let's move on, verse 10. I want you to look carefully now at verse 10. Let's put nine and 10 together, all right? Nine and 10 together. All right. Paul said, "This is that gospel. Don't you be ashamed of it."

He saved us. He called us. Not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and his own grace given to us in Christ Jesus before the world began, but is now manifested. This gospel is now manifested by the appearing of our Savior Jesus Christ. This gospel is now manifested.

What is he saying? Well, listen to me. See if you can catch these four things. First there was the purpose. First was according to his purpose. That is what he said, didn't he? He saved us and called us not according to our works, but according to his purpose. First there was the purpose. God purposed back before the foundation of the world. Back in the beginning God purposed to have a kingdom an eternal kingdom wherein dwelleth righteousness. God purposed to have a people like Christ. God purposed to have a kingdom of righteousness and holiness. And God entered into a covenant with his beloved Son and he made Christ the surety of a better covenant. He made him the great shepherd of the sheep of the everlasting covenant, the everlasting covenant of grace. Before the world began Christ was designated as the lamb slain before the foundation of the world. Before there was a sinner there was a Savior. Before there was a sin there was a sacrifice, before the foundation of the world.

The Lamb's book of Life, the book written before the foundation of the world, Revelation 13:8.

All right, listen. That's the purpose. All right. Following the purpose there is the promise. I gave it to you last week in my message where he said in Genesis 3:15 to fallen people, "The seed of woman will bruise the serpent's head, crush his government, kill his power. The seed of woman."

And then he came along and told Abraham, "I promise you a seed. In Isaac shall your seed be called."

He told Moses, "I will raise up a prophet."

He told Aaron, "I will raise up a priest like unto Melchizedek."

He told David, "I will raise up a king."

All of these were promises. First the purpose before the world and then the promises to a fallen race and then the pictures. Then came the pictures: the Passover lamb. When Israel was down in Egypt 400 years of slavery when God would deliver them, he said, "Moses,

take a lamb, a firstling of the flock without spot or blemish. Put it up four days and observe it and then slay it, roast it with fire, eat the flesh, put the blood on the door. When I see the blood I will pass over you.

The blood of that animal didn't hold back the wrath of God. It is the blood of Christ which that blood pictured. When the high priest went into the holy of holies there is the mercy seat. Under the mercy seat the broken law. And the high priest would take the blood, dip hyssop in it and sprinkle it on the mercy seat and make an atonement. You don't think, do you, you don't think, do you, that the blood of a lamb, an animal can hold back the wrath of God from a sinful race? Of course not. That blood is a picture. That blood...all the blood on Jewish altars could never put away one sin. That blood was offered as a picture of Christ.

First as the purpose. I have a people. They will be like Christ. I will send a Savior.

Then the promises. Well, he will be like the seed of woman, the seed of Abraham, the tribe of Judah, the son of David, the root of Jesse, a priest like Melchizedek.

Then the pictures. The Passover Lamb, the brazen serpent lifted up.

You don't suppose those people were healed by looking to a snake on a pole, do you? That snake on the pole represented Christ. That rock that was smitten, that rock is Christ. Pictures, pictures.

And then came the person. My friends, learn those four things. He said he saved us, he called us with a holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose in grace given us in Christ before the world began but is now manifest by the appearing of our Savior Jesus Christ. He is come.

John the Baptist said, "There he is, the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world, manifested in person."

The purpose, the promises, the pictures and now the person. See him hanging on that tree? He is our Passover. See him smitten and afflicted? He is our rock smitten. He is the one that gives us the water of life. He is the our ark. He is our mercy seat. He is our high priest. He is our atonement. He is our city of refuge. Flee to him. He is our righteousness.

What hath he done? He hath abolished death. Do you see that in verse 10? This glorious gospel is now manifested by the appearing of our Savior Jesus Christ who abolished death.

How did he abolish death? He died. He died for our sins. You see the wages of sin is death. He took my wages and died. I don't have to die. Sin, when it is finished bringeth forth death. My sins were laid on him. He died. I don't have to die. He died for our sins according to the Scriptures. See, he, God, made him, Christ, to be sin for us. He knew no

sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him. He hath abolished death and he that believeth on me will never die. Death hath no more dominion over him and over us. And he hath brought life and immortality to light through the gospel.

And then verse 11. Paul said, “Whereunto I am appointed a preacher. I am a preacher of that gospel. I am not a politician. I am a preacher. I am not an entertainer.” Paul said, “I am a preacher. I am not a promoter. I am a preacher. I am not an after dinner speaker. I am appointed a preacher of the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ.”

And I will tell you this. How shall they call on him in whom they have not believed and how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without a preacher?

God called some fellows to do what I am trying to do. And how shall they preach except they be sent? And I refuse to be sidetracked. Forty five years I have been doing this and I am still telling the same story, preaching the same gospel, telling men to look to the same Lord.

And I want to camp right here at verse 12. Now listen to it. And Paul said, “And for which cause I am in prison. I am in prison for preaching this gospel. That is all right. I am not ashamed. For I know whom I have believed and I am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed to him against that day.”

Now I am going to give you in closing a definition of faith, three fold. What is faith? Paul gives it right here. “I know whom I have believed.”

He didn't say, “I know what.”

I know whom, a person. I know who he is. I know what he did. I know why he did it. I know where he is now. I know whom I have believed.

Secondly, I am persuaded, confident that he and he alone is able to do what he said, what he promised. He is able to save to the uttermost them that come to God by him. He is able to present us faultless. He is able to keep us from falling and he is able to finish the work he has begun. I am confident, persuaded, all right, that which I have committed to him. That is faith. I know him. I am confident he is able and I have committed my soul to him.

The Testimony of our Lord.