

Not Ashamed of the Gospel

📖 2 Timothy 1:8-14

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We are studying 2 Timothy, Paul's last and final letter before he was executed under Emperor Nero in the summer of AD68. He wrote to Timothy, his disciple, who was timid, and who was trying to avoid being arrested and imprisoned like Paul. But Paul wanted him to faithfully endure this difficult time so that true, unadulterated Christianity could be passed on to the next generation. This message is just as important in our own day, when Christianity is out and paganism is in. And the Church is not handling this well. Most are capitulating or accommodating to pagan doctrines, but we need to stand firm on the truth once for all delivered to the saints, willfully enduring whatever persecution may come our way by trusting God.

Last time we looked at 1:1-7. In verses 1-2 we see the salutation. In verse 1 the author is Paul, his office is an apostle of Christ Jesus, the means by which he became an apostle is by the will of God, and the purpose of his ministry is for the promise of eternal life in Christ Jesus. In verse 2 we see the intended recipient is Timothy, his relationship to Paul is a beloved son, and grace, mercy and peace are extended to him through Paul from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Lord. In verses 3-7 we see Paul's thanksgiving for Timothy, recalling the faithfulness of prior generations. In verse 3 Paul had gratitude toward God for verse 5, Timothy's sincere faith. This is the God whom Paul says I serve with a clear conscience the way my forefathers did. Paul had become a member of the believing remnant of Israel and carried on the faithfulness of prior generations. He thanked God as he constantly remembered Timothy in his prayers night and day. This would encourage Timothy to be faithful. In verse 4, Paul longed to see Timothy. He recalled the last time he had seen him in tears due to Paul being arrested at Troas. Seeing Timothy would fill Paul with joy, something he lacked in the cold, dark dungeon of Rome. In verse 5 Paul was mindful of the genuine faith that was in Timothy, a faith that first dwelt in his grandmother Lois and his mother Eunice, and he was certain this same faith was in Timothy, despite the fact that Timothy had shrunk back due to the Neronian persecutions. And in verse 6, "for this reason," Paul says, "I remind you to fan the flame of the gift of God which is in you through the laying on of my hands." Timothy was not using his spiritual gift. He had the gift of teaching and was Paul's partner in ministry, but with Paul in prison it wasn't safe to openly teach the word of God. But this was no cause to run and hide. It was time to fan the flame, get it burning hot again, get turned on for the Lord Jesus Christ. The reason is verse 7, for God has not given us a

Spirit of timidity, but just the opposite, the Spirit of power and love and discipline, a reference to the fruit of the Spirit in our lives as we depend on Him. The basic goal of these verses is to encourage Timothy to re-engage the enemy and minister. As Wiersbe said, "Timothy had every reason to be encouraged and to have spiritual enthusiasm in his ministry. Paul loved him and prayed for him. His experiences in life had been preparation for his ministry, and Paul was confident of the genuineness of Timothy's faith. The Spirit within him would give all the power needed for ministry. What more could he want?"

Today, in verses 8-14, we come to the natural result of living by the Spirit of God. When we walk by the Spirit we are no longer "ashamed." Wiersbe said, "'Not ashamed' is a key idea in this chapter: Paul was not ashamed (2 Tim. 1:12); he admonished Timothy not to be ashamed (2 Tim. 1:8); and he reported that Onesiphorus was not ashamed of Paul's chain (2 Tim. 1:16)." The reason we don't need to be ashamed is because when we rely on the Spirit of God He gives us confidence. These verses are to inspire confidence in Timothy in the gospel which is the power of God unto salvation. In verse 8, Paul says, **Therefore do not be ashamed of the testimony of our Lord or of me His prisoner, but join with me in suffering for the gospel according to the power of God.** Since the word **Therefore** is there, we have to ask what it is there for? It is there to connect back to verse 7. God has given us the Spirit and this Spirit produces the fruit of power and love and discipline. **Therefore do not be ashamed of the testimony of our Lord or of me His prisoner, but** rather **join with me in suffering for the gospel according to the power of God.** Timothy should **not be ashamed** because dependence upon the Spirit of God does not produce shame in the Lord but confidence. Timothy was evidently intimidated by the persecutions of Christians now occurring under Nero. But intimidation is inconsistent with life by the Spirit. Paul therefore instructs him **not to be ashamed.** What he should not be **ashamed of** is two things, **the testimony of our Lord** and **of Paul himself, Christ's prisoner.** As far as **the testimony of our Lord,** the word **testimony** is μαρτυριον, from which we get "martyr," since one who gives their testimony unto death is a martyr. The **testimony of our Lord** is defined in 1 Tim 2:6 as "him who gave Himself as a ransom for all, the testimony given at the proper time." So it refers to the cross work of Jesus Christ. In short, Timothy was afraid to give the gospel. We might imagine that if Timothy were given the opportunity to give the gospel, but a Roman soldier or official was present, he might shrink back for fear of being arrested, since it was now illegal to be a Christian. However, Paul reminded him that intimidation is inconsistent with life by the Spirit. If He depended upon the Spirit he had all the power he needed to overcome intimidation. Secondly, Timothy was also **ashamed of Paul, Christ's prisoner,** meaning he was imprisoned because of Christ. If Timothy revealed his close association to Paul, he might end up in prison too. Timothy didn't want to go to prison, so he started keeping quiet. But this also revealed that Timothy was not living by the Spirit of God. An association with a well-known Christian who was imprisoned for the gospel should not cause us to dissociate from him or her. It simply is not consistent with the Spirit's impartation of power, love and discipline.

Instead, Paul says, **but** rather **join with me in suffering for the gospel according to the power of God.** The words **join with me in suffering** are one word in the Greek, it means to "suffer together with someone." One

might think that Paul wanted Timothy to suffer with him by being arrested and imprisoned as well, but all Paul really wants is for Timothy to not be afraid of suffering **for the gospel**. The means by which he can do this is stated to be **the power of God**. God gives us power to withstand intimidation by the Spirit He has given us. This power is beyond all that we can ask or think. It is therefore sufficient.

Because Paul has just mentioned the gospel and the power of God, in verse 9 he reminds Timothy of the gospel power by which God saved us. The logic of this step is that if God has saved us from the penalty of sin according to His plan of grace, then He can also save us from any danger that might befall us. Therefore, there is no reason to be intimidated. Verse 9, **God, who has saved us and called us with a holy calling**. Both **saved** and **called** are aorist participles. The aorist means they are completed actions. The salvation looks back to the moment we believed in Christ and He saved us. What He saved us from at that instant in time is the penalty of sin. The penalty of sin is eternal separation from God. This is justification, where we are declared to be righteous before Him. This is a once for all completed declaration. Not only has He **saved** us, but He has **called us with a holy calling**. At the same time He justified **us** He **called us** to some purpose. This purpose is **a holy** purpose, which means, set apart. This relates to the plan that He has for the rest of our lives. To fulfill this plan He has outfitted each of us with a spiritual gift or gifts and He has re-purposed our talents.

Paul says this justification and special purpose are **not according to our works**. Justification before God is never based on **our works**, and the special purpose we have is not based on **our works** either, **but rather according to His own purpose and grace which was granted us in Christ Jesus from all eternity**. The basis of our justification and special purpose is, first of all, **His own purpose**. The word **purpose** is from προθεσις and means "that which is planned in advance, *plan, purpose, resolve, will,*" and might better be translated, "according to His own design." His design is the first basis of our justification and special purpose in life. And secondly, the basis of our justification and special purpose is stated to be His **grace**. **Grace** is from χάρις and refers to a favor bestowed apart from any obligation due to us, and that means that it cannot have any association with **our works**, which Paul has already stated. It must, therefore, be a favor bestowed by Him apart from any consideration of what we have done, are doing or shall do in the future. And this design and grace **was granted us in Christ Jesus from all eternity**. The phrase **granted us**, means it was donated to us. The phrase **in Christ Jesus** is a dative of connection, and so it was granted to us in connection with **Christ Jesus**, and not independent of Him. The words **from all eternity** establish that this plan was not devised in time but in **eternity**. So, from all eternity the plan of God for our justification and special purpose in life as believers was His own grace design which would be bestowed on us through our connection with Jesus Christ.

Now, this plan in all its details and glories remained during the OT a kind of mystery, it wasn't quite clear. And that is why in verse 10 he says by contrast, **but now has been revealed by the appearing of our Savior Christ Jesus**. The verb **has been revealed** is from φανερω and means "disclosed, shown, made known." Only with the **appearing** of Christ in the incarnation did it become clear how Christ would save us. This verse shows that

before Christ appeared it was not exactly clear how God would save us. All that was known in the OT was information as it was progressively revealed. Adam and Eve were told that the seed of the woman would somehow defeat the seed of Satan and God provided a blood sacrifice and garments for a covering. To be saved their descendants had to believe that God would provide a male offspring who would somehow be wounded and provide a blood sacrifice. Abraham was told that this offspring would come through him and through Isaac, whom he offered on an altar as a picture of substitutionary blood atonement, then through Joseph and Jacob through him and at the Exodus the lamb and the blood over the door all pictured the Messiah, on down to David from whose family He would come. So the content one had to believe in order to be saved during the OT was growing, but it was not totally disclosed, says Paul, until the **appearing of our Savior Christ Jesus**. He was the offspring and He provided the substitutionary blood atonement. As the rest of the verse says, **who abolished death and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel**. The structure the Greek sentence says, “who, on one hand abolished death and on the other brought life and immortality to light.” Two things were happening on the cross. On one hand, death was being **abolished**. The word **abolished** is from καταργεω and means “rendered inoperative.” He rendered **death** inoperative by paying for the penalty of sin by His own death on the cross, a debt He did not owe because He had no personal sin. So it was a substitutionary death. He died in our place. This rendered death inoperative. J. Vernon McGee said, “Death means something altogether different to the child of God—Christ made it of no effect. Now, God did not eliminate death. Remember that Paul is writing this letter from prison where the sentence of death is upon him. But Paul is not talking about physical death. He means spiritual death, eternal death, which is separation from God. Christ has indeed abolished spiritual death so that no sinner need go to a place where he’ll be eternally separated from God. Christ is our Mediator, the one Mediator between God and man. God is satisfied with what Christ has done for us. The question is: Are *you* satisfied? Or are you trying to save yourself by your own good works? Let me repeat what I have said before: Man cannot be saved by perfect obedience, because he is incapable of rendering it. He cannot be saved by imperfect obedience, because God will not accept it. There is only one solution to the dilemma, and that is the One who said, “... I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me” (John 14:6).” For those who believe in Him, spiritual death no longer has power.

On the other hand, He **brought life and immortality**. The translation **brought** is confusing because the word is φωτιζω from which we get “photo” and refers to “light” or “shedding light”. We would translate, “brought to light life and immortality through the gospel.” Christ shed light on **life**, which is eternal **life**, the opposite of spiritual death. And He shed light on **immortality**, which is the resurrection. Resurrection was taught in the OT, but Christ shed light on it since He is the first resurrected from the dead. Now it is understood that eternal life and the resurrection are only through Him, and that He is central to **the gospel**. What He did in His death, shed light on eternal life, and in His resurrection, shed light on immortality, are the **gospel** message that saves.

And this, Paul says in verse 11 is what Paul **was appointed a preacher and an apostle and a teacher**. The word **appointed** is from τιθημι and refers to the special purpose God had for Paul. His special purpose has three

aspects. First, he is **a preacher**. This is a “proclaimer,” one who makes public declarations. Second, he is **an apostle**. An **apostle** is a “messenger,” one sent in the authority of another. Third, he is **a teacher**. A **teacher** is an “instructor,” one who instructs others by telling them what to do. The three are not all the same purposes, but they are three aspects of the special purpose that God gave to Paul.

And why is Paul reminding Timothy of the greatness of the gospel now revealed in Christ and of the three aspects of God’s purpose for him? Because in verse 8 Timothy was ashamed of what the Lord had done on the cross and his association with Paul. By reminding him he hopes to rekindle in Timothy a fresh appreciation of our salvation and special calling or purpose in life as believers, rooting it in the eternal plan of God brought to light through the incarnation of our Savior Jesus Christ.

In 1:12 **For this reason I also suffer these things**. What are **these things** Paul was suffering? It was the chains, the cold walls and a dark dungeon in Rome. And for what **reason**? For the reasons outlined in verses 10-11, that God had saved him and given him a special purpose and Paul was fulfilling that purpose. He was faithfully persevering in preaching, being an apostle and teaching. And now he was in chains for it and despite his sufferings he says, **I am not ashamed**. He was not ashamed of being in prison because he was not **ashamed** of the gospel for which he was imprisoned. And the reason he was not ashamed of the gospel he says is, **for I know whom I have believed and I am convinced that He is able to guard what I have entrusted to Him until that day**. Paul knew **whom He** had **believed** in, the Savior Christ Jesus, and there is salvation in no other name. You’ll notice that Paul did nothing more than believe in order to be saved. Salvation is through faith alone in Christ alone. To be saved he didn’t repent of his sins, he didn’t commit his life to Jesus, he didn’t get baptized, he didn’t keep the Ten Commandments, he didn’t confess, he didn’t walk an aisle, he didn’t pray a special prayer. Salvation is not by doing any of those things, it is by simply believing. And what are we doing when we believe in Him? Paul says, **I am convinced that He is able to guard what I have entrusted to Him until that day**. What is it that Paul had **entrusted to Him**? Well, obviously when he believed he was entrusting Him with his salvation. When you believed you did the same thing, you entrusted your salvation to Him. You were no longer trusting in yourself. And Paul was also **convinced that He is able to guard** that salvation. Paul couldn’t save himself and Paul couldn’t keep himself saved. But he was convinced that the One who saved him could also keep him saved. This is the doctrine of eternal security. It’s a very important doctrine for believers to understand. The doctrine of eternal security teaches that if God has justified a person before Himself, that person can never lose that justification. It’s better than saying once saved always saved, because the word saved has three tenses, past, present and future, and the only tenses that are once for all are the past and future tense. The past tense is you have been saved. What you have been saved from is the penalty of sin. That is justification. It occurs at an instant of time when a person believes and it is for all time because it is a legal verdict that is passed in heaven. The future tense is you will be saved. What you will be saved from is the presence of sin. That is glorification. When you receive a glorified body you are resurrected and it is also for all time. But the present tense is a little different. The present tense is you are being saved. What you are being saved from is the power of sin. This is

sanctification. It, however, is unlike the other two because while the Holy Spirit is always at work in us both to will and do His good pleasure, we are not always walking by the Spirit. So sanctification is not a once for all type of thing. It fluctuates. Sometimes we are being saved from the power of sin and other times we are succumbing to the power of sin. That's why, when we speak of eternal security we don't say once saved always saved, because that could be confusing if you read the Bible, as sometimes salvation is referring to that present tense, and sometimes it talks about losing that salvation, but every time the Bible speaks of justification before God, it is once justified always justified, and that is what we mean by eternal security. Once the declaration has been made in heaven, once the legal verdict has been declared, we are justified and will always be justified. There is nothing that can improve upon that justification. Even in eternity future, in the resurrection, we will remain justified and that, my friend is eternal security. Paul was convinced of it. He said, **I am convinced that He is able to guard what I have entrusted to Him until that day.** When Paul had faith in Jesus who died and rose again, he entrusted his justification before God to Him and He will guard it forever. It cannot be taken from Paul, it cannot be lost by Paul, it cannot be taken from you, it cannot be lost by you.

Having explained to Timothy his confidence in God and Christ, which he is obviously trying to stir up in Timothy, he now turns in verse 13 to give Timothy some instruction. **Retain the standard of sound words which you have heard from me, in the faith and love which are in Christ Jesus.** The words **retain the standard of sound words** are really, "hold to the pattern of sound words." Paul had patterned for Timothy **sound words**. **Sound words** are sound doctrine, sound teaching. Paul was a living example of the pattern in which words were laid down in teaching that were **sound**. There is a correct pattern in the way the words are spoken. This is why every group in Christendom, from Roman Catholic to Lutheran to Methodist, to Assemblies of God to Bible churches use, essentially, the same words. But the pattern in which they are spoken differs, and it's the pattern that is important, because any change in the pattern is a change in the message. And here it is. Paul says, "hold to the pattern of sound words **which you have heard from me.**" Almost all of us have listened to other Bible teachers. You might have listened to Fred, you might have listened to Jerry, you might have listened to Dennis, you might have listened to me. If you listen there is a pattern that we all share. It doesn't mean we agree on every single jot and tittle, but there is a 99% agreement to the pattern in which we convey doctrine. But once you step out of here and go somewhere else, you'll hear the same words, Jesus, salvation, God, faith, repentance, etc...but they are put together in a different pattern. The problem is that most people think that if they are hearing the same words they are hearing the same teaching. The problem is they don't know how to listen or they don't want to put in the effort to listen to the pattern. As a consequence, they are sitting under false doctrine that is destroying their lives. Paul said, you heard the pattern from me Timothy, now hold to that pattern, teach according to that pattern, which obviously implies that Timothy needs to fan the flame of his spiritual gift and get back to teaching the word of God.

And at the end of verse 13 he says do this **in the faith and love which are in Christ Jesus.** Any minister of sound doctrine must minister **in the faith and love.** Without them you are just a nuisance to people. Paul said in

1 Cor 13 that all that talk without **faith and love** is just a noisy gong or a clanging symbol. It's pretty annoying when you are making a lot of racket. So you have to minister **in faith and love**. And the virtues of faith and love come only from **Christ Jesus**. They are His virtues being poured out through us as we live in dependence upon Him. Otherwise, we're just making noise.

In verse 14 he gives Timothy some further instruction. **Guard through the Holy Spirit who dwells in us, the treasure which has been entrusted to you.** Here Timothy is given the responsibility of **guarding** some **treasure**. The word **treasure** in the Greek is actually two words, "good treasure" or "good deposit." But what is the "good deposit?" Some say it is the gospel from verse 10, others say it is sound teaching from verse 13. The view that it is sound teaching is most likely. Sound teaching is a "good treasure." This sound teaching was given to Timothy by Paul. Paul had **entrusted** it to him over many years and now his life was coming to an end. In 2:2 Paul will challenge Timothy to entrust it to other faithful men who will teach others also in a great long chain of faithfulness. But to do so, Timothy would need to **guard it** in his own generation. If he needs to **guard it**, then the implication is that it is threatened. Sound teaching is always threatened because Satan would have it destroyed. False teaching he doesn't worry about, but true doctrine will become less and less prevalent because of his attacks on it and because believers fail to **guard it**. The means of guarding it are stated to be **through the Holy Spirit who dwells in us**. The **Spirit dwells** in all believers during the dispensation of the Church and one of the chief reasons is to guard sound doctrine in faith and love. This was not true in the dispensation of Israel. Sound doctrine was guarded by the prophets. But now that we all have the Spirit of God it falls upon us to guard it through constant dependence on the Holy Spirit who dwells in us.

The passage has gone full circle. It began with the Spirit and His fruit in verse 7 and it ended with the Spirit and His indwelling in verse 14. The Holy Spirit is the key to living the Christian life. We must learn to depend upon Him if we are to fulfill God's special purpose for each of our lives. Timothy was intimidated and afraid. He needed to remember that the Spirit he had received was not a spirit of timidity but power and love and discipline. For that reason, in verse 8 Timothy should not be ashamed of the testimony of our Lord or of Paul, His prisoner. But rather he should join in suffering with Paul for the gospel. And the basis of his suffering would be the power of God. The one who in verse 9 has saved us from the penalty of sin and given us a special purpose in life, not a salvation and calling according to our works, but according to His design and grace which was granted to us in connection with Christ Jesus from all eternity, but which in verse 10 was only now disclosed clearly by the appearance of our Savior Christ Jesus, who rendered spiritual death inoperative and brought spiritual life and the resurrection into clear focus through the gospel, the very thing in verse 11 for which Paul was specially called to proclaim, to relay as a messenger and to instruct others. And it was for this reason in verse 12 that Paul suffered his chains, but he was not ashamed of them, because he suffered for the gospel. And he knew in whom he had believed, in Christ, and he was convinced that Christ is able to guard his salvation until that day. Therefore, in verse 13 he instructs Timothy, hold on to the pattern of sound teaching that you have received from me, that sound formulation of truth, and do so in faith and love which are in Christ Jesus. And verse 14,

guard the good treasure of sound teaching that has been entrusted to you, by means of the Holy Spirit who dwells in you.

What can we learn? First, that the Holy Spirit is the key to living the Christian life. Second, that suffering for the gospel is a privilege. Third, that being reminded of God's purposes in salvation are a good way to motivate us to continue living the Christian life. Fourth, that once we are justified we are always justified. Fifth, that there is a pattern of sound teaching, an articulation that is correct and in line with Jesus and the apostles and the prophets, and this is the standard. Sixth, that we must guard this pattern of teaching. It is of greatest importance because there are those who would like to take it from us. All in all, Paul was trying to stir up, motivate Timothy to re-engage the ministry and to not be ashamed of Christ or of Paul.