

Text: 2 Timothy 1:6-10

Title: Don't be Ashamed

Date/Location: Sunday May 22, 2016 at FBC

Introduction

An important part of studying Scripture is to read Scripture. Let's read chapter 1 of 2 Timothy. I want you to notice, and even underline in your Bible, the occurrences of the phrase "not ashamed" in verses 8, 12, and 16. It occurs again in 2 Timothy 2:15.

8 Therefore **do not be ashamed** of the testimony of our Lord, nor of me His prisoner, but share with me in the sufferings for the gospel according to the power of God.

12 For this reason I also suffer these things; nevertheless I am **not ashamed**, for I know whom I have believed and am persuaded that He is able to keep what I have committed to Him until that Day.

16 The Lord grant mercy to the household of Onesiphorus, for he often refreshed me, and was **not ashamed** of my chain...

The Greek dictionary (BDAG) defines *to be ashamed* as a feeling of loss of status because of something or someone. Our association with that something or someone makes us feel a loss of prestige or standing in the eyes of others, or of God. There are things we should be ashamed of, namely all sins. But the world is not ashamed of sin. Then there are things the world says we should be ashamed of, like the gospel, or Christ, or the truth, or morality and righteousness.

We should recall passages such as Mark 8:38 of being ashamed of the Lord; Matthew 10:32-33; Luke 16:3 of the unjust steward; Romans 6:21 of being ashamed about sin; 2 Cor. 7:14, 9:4, and 10:8 of being ashamed in boasting about someone; Philippians 1:20 of a legal evaluation; 2 Thess. 3:14 regarding a person walking disorderly; Titus 2:8 and 1 Peter 3:16 of an opponent of the gospel; Hebrews 2:11 of Christ not being ashamed to call us His brothers; Hebrews 11:16 of God not being ashamed to be called the God of the faithful; 1 Peter 4:16 of not being ashamed when suffering as a Christian; and 1 John 2:28 of being ashamed before the Lord when He returns. The most well-known "ashamed" passage is Rom. 1:16 about the gospel. And that is what Paul is driving at in his letter to Timothy. See also Acts 5:41; Romans 1:27, 9:33, 10:11; 1 Cor. 6:5, 11:6, 11:22, 14:35, 15:34; 2 Cor. 4:2; Eph. 5:12; Phil. 3:19; Heb. 6:6, 12:2; 1 Peter 2:6; Jude 13; Rev. 3:18 and 16:15.

This phrase is the basis of a thought that we can use to organize our understanding of this passage. Notice that Paul commands Timothy **not to be ashamed**; Paul says he himself is **not ashamed**; and he commends Onesiphorus for **not being ashamed** but instead working hard to help Paul in his need. We will focus upon Timothy in this study.

I. Sources of Shame for the Christian

- A. Because of the massive pressures of the world, it is easy to fall into a feeling of intimidation regarding your Christian faith. The same principle applies to a minister of the gospel, even one as well-prepared as Timothy.
- B. The ultimate source of shame is within the human spirit and is connected to the conscience. When it is shame having to do with the things of God, this shame boils down to **selfishness**. That is, it is a painful kind of feeling that you have lost status in the eyes of others. Sometimes shame is good, in the sense that it is connected with a conviction from the conscience and can motivate you to correct the shameful situation. In that way, it is a sense of loss before God, and that is beneficial.
- C. Other times, it is a sense of loss before the worldly society brought on by their bad behavior. Possible sources of this that Timothy could have faced, and that we face include:
 - 1. Persecution from the government.
 - 2. False teachers.
 - 3. Ridicule from within the professing (liberal) church.
 - 4. The homosexual agenda.
 - 5. Abortion promoters.
 - 6. Repeated claims that Christians are stupid, uneducated, insane, intolerant, hateful, bigoted, homophobic, transphobic, etc.
 - 7. The claim that we should be ashamed for not supporting the sinner's shameful behavior or freedom to carry out that behavior.

II. To Combat Being Ashamed of Christ, v. 6-8

- A. Timothy Had to Stir Up His Gift, v. 6
 - 1. "Stirring up" refers to re-kindling a flame, as by stirring the embers of fire and putting on some more kindling wood or dry logs to get the fire going again.
 - 2. It is not 100% certain that Timothy was cooling down in his faith-temperature, but it seems likely that his boldness was waning in light of severe persecution, and Paul had to appeal to him, in light of his own imminent death, to be strong and not give up.
 - 3. What Timothy was stirring up was his spiritual gift. This gift was given by God, but was given through the agency of Paul's laying on of hands at his ordination, referred to in 1 Timothy 4:14. I believe the surrounding verses there, as well as 2 Timothy 4:2-5, give us a sufficient definition of that gift: Christian leadership in the church through preaching, teaching, evangelism, and being an example to the believers. This is what Timothy was called to do, and he was to do it!

4. Each believer has a spiritual gift or gifts given by the Holy Spirit. A careful study of Romans 12, 1 Cor. 12:4-11, and Ephesians 4:7 should fully convince us of that truth. Then we need to realize that whatever God has given us, we are stewards of it (1 Peter 4:10-11), and will be judged as to how we make use of it.
5. Making the most use of what God has given us will help us to combat shame of the gospel. If we know we are doing what God called us to do, who cares what the world thinks? Shame on THEM for not acknowledging God. Shame on THEM for not believing in Christ. Shame on THEM for their sin. Shame on THEM for their intolerance of Christian faith and practice. Not shame on us!

B. Timothy Had to Remember the Spirit God Gave to Him, v. 7

1. The fact is that God has given Christians not a spirit of fear, but a spirit of power, and of love, and of a sound mind. Take it to the bank. This is for believers only, of course.
2. Meditate on power, love, and sound mind for a minute. Real power comes from God and is manifested through the gospel (see verses 9-10). Love toward God, as it is perfected, casts out fear (1 John 4:18-19). And the sound mind is a self-disciplined, prudent mind; opposite of irrational, fearful, out of control.
3. A spirit of fear or anything related to it, like shame, comes from somewhere else. Where? The flesh is the answer here. It sucks the life out of faith when it is encouraged by the world and the devil. Fear causes low utilization of one's gifts. Going ahead and doing God's work pushes out fear.

C. Timothy Had to Face Shame Head On, v. 8a.

1. Here is Paul's command. Don't be, or stop being, ashamed of the gospel and of Christ's prisoners in jail for the gospel. Period.
2. If you are ashamed of the gospel, quit it. What is there to fear—man? What can man do to us? Not invite us to their birthday parties? What is there to fear—the devil? What can he do to us? Make an accusation against us before God that Christ will rebuke?

D. Timothy Had to Share in the Sufferings of Obedience to the Gospel, v. 8b

1. This is powerful. Not only was Timothy to erase any shred of shame over the gospel from his mind, but he was to be ready to be so obedient to the gospel that he might even suffer for it. This meant moving his boldness from -100 to +100 really quickly.
2. We need to be ready to be obedient to the gospel even if it lands us in jail, or worse. Many of our brothers and sisters are not ashamed to name the name of Christ even if it means death, imprisonment, loss of their goods, etc. Some of us are pretty weakly obedient to what God wants us to do, and we have NOTHING to fear. We live a life of luxury and ease, and can't even summon

enough strength to obey God's call in the gospel to live righteously, to witness for Christ, to sacrifice, or to stand against evil.

III. To Combat Shame in Christ, Remember the Power of God, v. 9-10

A. Recall what God has done for you and the power it took to do it, v. 9a

1. God saved us out of sin. This takes miraculous power to make a spiritually dead sinner into a spiritually alive saint.
2. God called us to be holy. It also takes miraculous power to set us on the narrow path and cultivate holiness within.

B. Remember that salvation is from God, not self, v. 9b

1. The text says that God saved/called us not according to our works. If we were to be evaluated according to our works, we would be dead. The standard of our works is insufficient to meet God's qualifications. No one's resume is good enough to earn a place in heaven.
2. Rather, God saved us according to His own purpose and grace. God wanted to save Paul and Timothy, and anyone who is a Christian, and He applied His grace to get it done.

C. Recall that God planned this before time, v. 9c. God as good as gave us grace before we were alive.

1. Of course, it could not be applied until we were alive, and even after that, at the moment we believed by His grace.
2. God revealed the gospel at the coming of Christ, v. 10a. To us, bound in time as we are, we cannot access the "before time began" stuff of God. We see, through the coming of Christ, God's plan coming to fruition.
3. The fact that God has set such favor upon you ought to give you great encouragement and power, even in the midst of a society that wants to put you to shame for being a Christian.

D. Realize that Christ abolished death and brought eternal life, v. 10b.

1. Abolishing death means to render it powerless to keep its prey. His resurrection was the undoing of death. It cannot hold anyone permanently, not even unbelievers! They too will be raised and judged by God.
2. Immortality has been sought by mankind forever. Reincarnation, the fountain of youth, and modern technological striving for long life are ways that people try to avoid death. But the world hasn't figured out yet what Christians know—Christ already solved the immortality problem, and there is an easy way to participate. It just happens to require that you acknowledge your sin, insufficiency, and total dependence upon God. Then, calling out to the risen Christ for salvation, you will have life and immortality.