

Be Not Ashamed
2 Timothy 1:8-12
Pastor John Miller

The book of 2 Timothy is Paul's last will and testament, and he's writing it from prison. It's believed it's about the summer or late fall of 66 A.D., and Paul is not just in prison, he's in a dungeon. I showed you a couple of photos of what is known as the Mamertine Prison last Wednesday night. It was really just a pit with a hole in the roof, and they would throw the prisoner in there. Paul knows for certain that he's going to be executed. He had the sentence of death in himself, so he's writing for a couple of reasons. He's writing so that Timothy would come visit him. He wanted to see him before he died. At the end of the book he says, "Please come before winter and bring my coat and the parchments and the books that I left," and so forth. He was also writing because he knew that he would die, but he's going to pass the torch to Timothy, who is now going to take up the mantle and be Paul's representative in preaching the gospel and overseeing the work of the ministry in the church.

Timothy was timid. He was shy. He was young and apprehensive in his ministry, so he needed a lot of encouragement like we do. Paul's going to begin to speak tonight about the need to be courageous and being willing to even suffer for the gospel of Jesus Christ. As we look at our world around us, it's getting darker all the time. We need to be courageous. We need to be willing to actually suffer not only for Christ but for the gospel of Jesus Christ.

Just a little bit review as we get a running start on 2 Timothy 1:6-8, Paul says, "Wherefore I put thee in remembrance that thou stir up," rekindle again like a flame that had been going out, rekindle the fire, "the gift of God, which is in thee by the putting on of my hands. 7 For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind." In order to encourage Timothy, Paul expressed to him his love in verses 1-2, his prayers in verses 3-4, and then his confidence in Timothy's faith, verse 5. Then, he encouraged him in verses 6-7 that, "God has given you a gift, and you need to stir up this gift and use it for the glory of God and for the good of others." Notice verse 7, "For God hath not given us the spirit of fear," the word "fear" there is the word timidity, so God's Spirit doesn't make us timid but actually makes us bold and courageous. God has given us power, the word is dynamis, we get our word dynamic from it. God has given us love, that is, agape, divine love. God has given us a sound mind which is a reference to self control—your mind is clear, you think properly, and it brings us self control. He encouraged Timothy that way.

Paul then begins in verse 8, our text tonight, and does three things. He tells Timothy not to be ashamed (verse 8). He tells him reasons not to be ashamed in verses 9-10, and in verses 11-12, Paul says, "I am not ashamed." I'm going to give you this outline again as we go through, but first of all (verse 8) we see Paul exhorting or charging Timothy, "Don't be ashamed." Look at it with me. "Be not thou therefore ashamed," now the "therefore" takes you back to verses 6-7, "...stir up the gift of God, which is in thee by the putting on of my hands," and ordained you into ministry, the recognition of God's call in your life, and reminding, "God

hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind. 8 Be not thou therefore ashamed of the testimony of our Lord, nor of me his prisoner: but be thou partaker of the afflictions," there it is, "of the gospel according to the power of God."

The first exhortation to Timothy is do not be ashamed. The first thing he tells him not to be ashamed of in verse 8 is the testimony of our Lord. What does he mean by that? Well, he's not talking about the testimony of Jesus Himself while He was on earth. He's talking about his testimony, Timothy's testimony, about Jesus and the gospel message. Just like today, you might be ashamed. I remember when I was a young Christian, it was scary for me, it was frightening for me, to tell my friends—my party crowd, the guys I hung with—that I am a Christian. I'll never forget. One time a friend came over, "Hey, what've you been doing?" I'd just gotten saved. I'd been born again, and I'm reading the Bible. God's changing my life, and it's somebody I used to do drugs with. He comes over, "Hey, what've you been doing?" I'm thinking, This is it. You know, I'd just become a Christian. They're gonna freak out, but I remember I was afraid and said, "Oh, nothing." We talked for a while and he left. When he left I said, "Lord, forgive me." I felt like Peter that denied the Lord. I said, "Lord, if you give me another opportunity, I pray, with Your help, I won't chicken out." It was really amazing, the same guy came back about 15 minutes later. He goes, "I just had this funny urge I needed to come back, you know, what's going on?" I just said, "Sit down. I gotta tell you what God's been doing in my life." It just kind of blew his doors off, but I'll never forget that fear that I had.

I remember another time. I became a new Christian and was real courageous so I put (we used to call them) an ichthus, it's the little fish-shape with "Jesus is Lord" in the middle of it, and stuck it on my '66 VW bus, my old surf bus. All my friends gathered around and go, "What's that on your car? Is that a Christian sticker?!" I remember going (gulping loudly), "Yeeees." "What?! You're a Christian?" They freaked out and started mocking and laughing at me and putting me down and all that stuff. I just remember, I don't know if you've ever struggled with that, there was that timidity, that fear; but God (as we saw in verse 7) hasn't given us the spirit of fear. He's given us power. He's given us love. He's given us self control. So, "Timothy, don't be ashamed of the testimony of our Lord." Maybe you're ashamed to witness to your neighbors or the people you work with or maybe the person that's next to you on the job. You need to pray and ask God to give you that power, that love, that self control, and the ability—as you're filled with the Spirit—to be able to testify to the things of Christ.

In the context this is apropos because when Paul wrote this, Christianity had become an illegal religion. In 64 A.D., Rome started persecuting Christians wholeheartedly. Caesar set fire to Rome (I talked about it last week as we introduced the book) and blamed it on the Christians. Christians were being arrested and thrown into prison, being martyred and put to death. It was a very, very serious thing to testify for Jesus Christ, and I believe that we are headed right now in America to the day very, very soon when it will become more openly hostile toward Christians. It's hostile to Christians right now, and it's only going to get worse. The Bible says in the last days, "...evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving, and being deceived," so you need to be fortified and strengthened and filled with the Spirit and ready that whatever happens—you might lose your job, you might get demoted, you may not be invited to

the party, you might be ostracized, laughed at, or mocked—you've got to be willing to say, "I'm not going to be ashamed of the testimony of Jesus Christ."

Jesus said in Mark 8:38 (I quote it quite often here at our church), "Whosoever therefore shall be ashamed of me...in this adulterous and sinful generation; of him also shall the Son of man be ashamed, when he cometh in the glory of his Father with the holy angels." God help us not to be ashamed of the testimony of our Lord. Secondly, he said, "...nor of me his prisoner," so don't be ashamed of Christ's testimony or of Christ's prisoner. Don't be ashamed of the message of Christ or the messenger of Christ. Again, it was a dangerous thing to be a friend of Paul, who was an enemy of the state of Rome waiting his execution in prison. The same lot would fall to you if you were identified with him.

A little footnote there, notice "his prisoner." It would have been easy for Paul to say, "I'm Caesar's prisoner," or "I'm the prisoner of Rome." I like it when Paul talks about being in prison, it's always the Lord's prisoner. Why? Because he had this concept that I'm in the hands of God, I'm under God's care, I'm in God's control. Rome didn't put me here, God put me here; and God has a purpose and God has a plan and God has a desire. He mentions our Lord and immediately says, "...nor of me his prisoner," that's the Lord's prisoner. Thirdly, he says, "...but be thou partaker of the afflictions of the gospel according to the power of God," so, Christ's message, Christ's messenger, and the suffering that is associated with being a partaker, sharing together in the afflictions. Paul was suffering and being persecuted and so, "Timothy, don't be afraid."

We get this idea that in the Christian life we never suffer, that it should just be all roses, it should all be fun, it should just be a good time and always happy. We studied in the beatitudes last Sunday morning, "Blessed are they that mourn: for they shall be comforted." In the Christian life there is that time to weep, there is that time to cry. So many Christians think that it's all a time of joy. I heard the story of a Sunday school teacher that asked a little boy (his name was Johnny) in a class of five-year-olds, "Johnny, what's your favorite parable in the Bible?" Johnny said, "I love the parable where everybody loafs and fishes." That's kind of the Christians' favorite Bible story—where you get to loaf and fish—but we don't want to face persecution and the opposition that comes against us, so be willing to suffer for the gospel. Here's the introduction in this passage of the gospel, the good news, which notice is, "...the power of God."

Remember Romans 1:16, that great verse where Paul said, "For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation...to the Jew first, and also to the Greek," or to the Gentile. Paul tells Timothy not to be ashamed of Christ's testimony, of me His prisoner, nor of the gospel, be willing to suffer for the sake of the gospel, and the gospel is the power of God. Now, he moves (verses 9-10, follow with me) to some concrete reasons why Timothy shouldn't be ashamed and we as well. Let's read verses 9-10. He mentions God at the end of verse 9 and then says, "Who," referring to God, "hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began, 10 But is now made manifest by the appearing of our Saviour Jesus Christ, who hath abolished death, and hath brought life and

immortality to light through the gospel.” There is just a wealth of doctrinal and theological truth in these verses as he seeks to encourage and strengthen Timothy not to be ashamed.

In summary, let me give you the three reasons that Paul gives Timothy and us that we should not be ashamed of the gospel. First, we shouldn't be ashamed of the gospel of Christ because God saved us by His grace through the gospel. Don't be ashamed of Christ because we're saved by God's grace. Go back with me to verse 9, and let's unpack this verse a little bit. It says, “Who hath saved us,” so we have been saved, past tense. The Christian has three tenses to their salvation: we've been saved, we're being saved, and we will be saved. I'm never going to tire repeating that. You say, “Well, Pastor John, you've said that before.” That's because you forget it and I need to remind you: you've been saved, you're being saved, and you will be saved. Your salvation has past, present, and future tense. We've been saved from what? We've been saved from the penalty of sin. If you're taking notes, I'm going to give you three P's that you might want to write down in your notes, (preachers love points with P's) the penalty of sin. The Bible says, “For the wages of sin is death,” so that death that was ours because of our sin was meted upon Christ. He took our penalty of sin. I don't have to die. “The soul that sins will surely die,” the Bible says, but Jesus died in my place. If you're a Christian tonight, no penalty for your sin. It's taken care of. When Jesus died on the cross He cried, “Tetelestai,” it is finished or paid in full. He paid for my sins. Jesus paid it all, All to Him I owe, Sin had left a crimson stain, he washed it white as snow.

The second sense of my salvation, the present tense, is that I'm being saved from the power of sin. That's what we call sanctification. In other words, I still sin, but I sin less and less the more I walk with the Lord. If you've been a Christian for some time, there should be sins that no longer are a part of your life. If all the same sins that you had when you got saved are still in your life, then you need to question whether or not you're really saved. I'm not saying you're perfect, but if you still have problems that aren't dropping off or going away, then you have to say, “Did I really get born again,” because the Bible says, “Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.” One of the first things I noticed when I got saved was my words changed, my speech cleaned up. You know, bad words stopped coming out of my mouth because God changed my heart. You know, whatever's in the well comes up in the bucket, right? If there's bad words coming out of your mouth, then maybe your heart hasn't been changed; so you're being saved from the power of sin.

Here's the third stage, future, you will be saved from the very presence of sin. So, we're saved from sin's penalty, we're being saved from sin's power—we're growing in sanctification, in holiness, in likeness to Christ—and one day, when we get to heaven, when we all get to heaven...we used to sing that song, “When We all Get to Heaven,” What a day of rejoicing that will be, some of you old-timers remember that song. What a great song. When we get to heaven, it's going to be a day of rejoicing because no more sin. Praise God! Amen? We're going to be free from the very presence of sin altogether. We're going to be in heaven. There's not going to be any sin anymore. There won't be any Satan anymore. There won't be any suffering anymore. There won't be any sorrow anymore. He'll wipe away all tears from our

eyes, so when he says this, He saved us.

Now, he mentions at the end of verse 8, "...the gospel according to the power of God." This is so typical of Paul. He can't mention the gospel without kind of getting into a little bit of a rabbit trail. It's still on the same theme of encouraging us not to be ashamed of the gospel, but the minute the idea of gospel comes to his mind, he breaks it down. He wants to explain it. He wants us to understand what the gospel is. It's the gospel that saves us. Notice he also called us, so He saves us by calling us. This is God's effective call to salvation, that "...whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified," Romans 8. What an awesome, awesome day when God called you! I'm not talking about the phone rang and it was God. I'm talking about by His Holy Spirit that God convicted you of your sin, of your unrighteousness, and your need for Him. The call of God is the Holy Spirit drawing us to Jesus and bringing us to salvation, and notice He called us with a holy calling. So, saved us has the idea of rescued us, and then He called us with a holy calling—God's call upon our lives are to live and walk in holiness.

Then, Paul makes it clear (this is so awesome) in verse 9, that calling, and that saving, that rescuing was, "Not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began." Now, I don't want to get sidetracked, but I want to make it clear that if you're saved, you're saved because God chose you. If you're saved, you're saved because God called you. It's not because of who you are or what you've done. You say, "Well, I repented of my sins, and I believed in Jesus Christ." Yeah, I understand that, that's the human side, but you only did that because God called you and because God convicted you and because God drew you. Jesus said, "No man comes to the Father unless the Holy Spirit draws him." I know what some of you are thinking: Oh, John's going to go into some Calvinist rant or something. No. This is what the Bible teaches. This is clearly what the Bible teaches. If you reject Jesus Christ, you have no one to blame but yourself. If you trust in Jesus and are saved and believe in Him, you have God alone to thank for your salvation. You can take no credit, no responsibility, it wasn't because you were charismatic or good-looking, wonderful, or God needed you on His team because of your intelligence. No. The Bible says, "But God hath chosen the foolish things...the weak things," the base things, the despised things, so "...that no flesh should glory in his presence." This verse flat out teaches that God saved us and called us, not according to our works, in other words, it's not something we did to merit, earn, or deserve the grace, the mercy, or the favor of God.

When you take communion tonight, you want appreciation to fill your heart? Just stop and think, Who am I that God would save me? Why am I here tonight? Why do I know Christ tonight? Why is it God showed mercy to me and saved me by His grace? I was living in darkness and running from God, but in His mercy and grace, He reached down and saved me, redeemed me. Notice it was, "...according to his own purpose and grace," so not our works but God's own purpose. This is the sovereign purpose of God, "which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began." You're going, "Really?" It's like Spurgeon said, "It's a good thing God chose me before I was born, because he surely would not have afterwards." God chose us not only before we were born, God chose us before He ever created the heavens and the earth.

When did God choose you? In eternity past. That's amazing! Before the heavens and the earth were even created, God, in His infinite purpose, knew that one day He would save you by His grace—God's sovereign purpose and grace. This is actually the reason why we should not be ashamed of the gospel because it is the power of God. It's the purpose of God for salvation, for saving people in Christ Jesus, even before the world began.

We have at the end of verse 9, eternity past, and at the end of verse 10, we come to the present. Notice it in verse 10, "But is now made manifest by the appearing of our Saviour Jesus Christ, who hath abolished death, and hath brought life and immortality to light through the gospel." The first reason not to be ashamed is God saves you by His grace. Secondly, Jesus defeated death (verse 10). Jesus Christ came into the world to nullify and to disarm death and one day conquer sin, death, and the grave altogether, "But is now made manifest," so in eternity past, God chose you by His grace and His purpose; but in time, God sent His Son Jesus Christ (verse 10) and He was manifest—that word "manifest" and the word "appearing." The word "appearing" we get our word epiphany from. It means appearing or tangible, visible appearing. Normally it's used for the Second Coming of Christ, but Paul uses it here very clearly for the first coming or Advent of Christ.

*What you have in verse 10, at the beginning of the verse, is the incarnation where God became a man in the person of Jesus Christ. God took on flesh, the incarnation, the appearing of God in human form, so "...the appearing of our Saviour Jesus Christ," and what did He come for? To abolish death. He came to defeat death. The Bible teaches very clearly that Jesus died, was buried, and then three days after He was buried, He rose again from the dead. Now, He rose in an immortal, eternal body. No one before, no one since, has ever done that. Nobody's ever risen from the dead. Now, people have been brought back from the dead, but when they came back from the dead, they came back in a mortal body and had to die again. Bummer! I think dying once is enough for me. If I die, don't pray, "God, bring John back," okay? I'm not going to be happy if that happens. Let me go.

When Jesus came back out of the grave, He had an immortal body. He could be touched, He could be seen, He could be recognized—He still bore the scars—but He could disappear. He passed right through that sepulcher. The stone was not rolled away so that Jesus could get out on that resurrection morning, the stone was rolled away so others could get in and see that Jesus has risen from the dead. When He rose—be very clear—it was a physical, bodily resurrection. When they went into that tomb, there were grave cloths lying there, but the body of Jesus had risen from the dead. It was gone, and now Jesus is in that eternal body. He ascended in that body back to heaven (Acts 1), so we have the crucifixion, the resurrection, the ascension, He went back to heaven, and they saw Him; and we have the exaltation, He was seated at the right-hand of God the Father interceding for us there, and He's going to come back for us. This is, as I said, packed with doctrinal truth. This is all as it pertains to the gospel, so don't be ashamed because God saved you by His grace and Jesus defeated death.

Notice in verse 10, "...who hath abolished death." You say, "Well, wait a minute, Pastor John, I don't get it. People still die. In what way or in what sense did Jesus abolish death?" The word

“abolish” there doesn’t mean that He’s eliminated death, death still takes place and even Christians die, but what it means is that He nullified death or He disarmed death. It’s important to understand that word there that he says “abolished death” means that He disarmed or nullified death. Paul said in 1 Corinthians 15, “O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?” You know, when he says that, he’s actually mocking death. He’s kind of going, “Nanny, nanny, nanny! You can’t touch me!” Where is your sting? Where is your power?

When you become a Christian, guess what happens? Death is no longer a problem. Did you hear what I said? Death, for the believer, is no longer a problem. Death, for the believer, becomes a blessing. “...to be absent from the body,” is to be what? “present with the Lord.” Praise God! Paul said, “...having a desire to depart, and to be with Christ; which is far better,” than being here on earth. Remember before you were saved, death was a problem. It’s going to end the party. It’s going to end the fun time. No one wants to die. They want to live all they can, get all they can, have a good time, and no one wants to die. Even nonbelievers today, the terror of death, they’re afraid of death. That’s the worse thing that could happen, “Oh no! They died.” When a believer dies, we celebrate! Some of you are looking at me like I’m crazy. The Bible says, “Precious in the sight of the LORD is the death of his saints.” If you ever read that John Miller has died, celebrate because it’s my coronation! Amen? I’m going to my crowning. I’m going to heaven. You gotta stick around in Menifee for a while, and I’m going to rejoice when you go to heaven because it’s your coronation. It’s your graduation. It’s your promotion. We don’t lose loved ones in Christ, we know exactly where they are. They’re with the Lord!

Paul wrote to the believers in Thessalonica and said, “But I would not have you to be ignorant... that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope. For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him,” when He comes. When the Lord returns, their bodies are going to be resurrected and we’re going to meet them in the air. It’s going to be an awesome thing! Paul says, “...who hath abolished death.” In 2 Corinthians 5, Paul says, “...to be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord.” “...if our earthly house,” body, “...were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.”

Do you know how many times in 45 years that I’ve done funerals, do you know how many times in 45 years I have stood in a pulpit just like this and looked into people’s faces and talked about heaven and talked about death and talked about life? How many people have heard the gospel in funerals that I’ve officiated? I can’t tell you how the unbeliever doesn’t know how to cope with death, doesn’t know how to deal with death, doesn’t know how to even face death, but when I’m looking at Christians, there’s just this sense of peace and joy and confident that they’re with the Lord and there’s that assurance. I actually enjoy preaching funerals for Christians, for believers who have died, because it’s just so exciting. I love to be at the graveside when we lower their body into the ground. I love to talk about the resurrection and the hope that we have in Jesus Christ! Believe it or not, it excites me! It thrills me! The resurrection is our blessed hope. We don’t sorrow as others who have no hope because Jesus abolished death. He nullified death. He took the sting out of death. It has no power over us.

Lastly, "...and hath brought life and immortality to light," and that's my third point on why we should not be ashamed. We shouldn't be ashamed because God saved us by His grace, we shouldn't be ashamed because Jesus defeated death, and we shouldn't be ashamed because Jesus brings us eternal hope. At the end of verse 10, "...and hath brought life and immortality to light through the gospel." You probably won't believe me when I say that's one of my favorite statements in the Bible, that through the gospel there's new light, there's new understanding on life and immortality of the soul that we will live forever. In the Old Testament it was all kind of fuzzy. It was kind of like looking through a glass dimly and darkly—not a lot of clarity in the Old Testament about when someone died, where they went. They had the hope of heaven, but they used the word "sheol" which is the grave or death. They didn't have this real clear confidence that when you died you'd go to be with the Lord.

What did Jesus Christ change when He came? What did He bring? He brought light to immortality and life through the gospel. We actually know where we will go when we die. We have a hope that the world can't understand and the world can't take away—the world can't give and it can't take away. Jesus Christ has not only taken the sting out of death, but He's opened our eyes and given us clarity. There need not be any foggiess as to where we go or what happens when we die. Do you know why? Because Jesus went into the grave and He came out, and we're going to follow Him. Just as Jesus went into the grave and came out, I'm going to go into the grave, but I will come out.

Years ago, let me tell you a story that I haven't told in a long time, I went to Hawaii when I was a youngster. I just got out of high school and went to Hawaii. I lived in a tent on the beach for about three months. I just kind of did the whole Hawaiian thing and hung out in Hawaii, but I remember one time we hiked up into the mountains and went to this big waterfall—a really high waterfall—and these people were jumping off the waterfall into the water. When we first got there, no one was there and the water was kind of murky. I remember my friend that took me there goes, "You know, we outta just jump. We outta jump into the pool." I thought, I don't know if it's safe. I don't know how deep it is. I don't know if it's okay. We kind of hung there for a while. I remember we were standing there, and we were like afraid to jump in. This little tiny Hawaiian kid walks up. He looks up at us like, "What's your problems?" And, SWOOP! jumped right off! He didn't hesitate. Just SWOOP! jumped off! NEEEEOOO, CH! hit the water, disappeared, and I'm like, Okay, let's see what happens. A couple seconds later, he popped up with this big smile on his face! After that it's like, "Oh, get outta the way, I'm next! I'm next!" We're ready to just jump in because he had taken the fear out of it—he went into the water and came up safe. Jesus has gone into the grave, and He came up safe—He came up, you might say, with a big smile on His face. Jesus said, "I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live: And whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die. Believes thou this?" We don't need to be afraid to die because Jesus has gone into the murky waters of death and has come out safely for us, so we don't need to be afraid of death. Don't be ashamed, God saved you by His grace, Jesus defeated death, and Jesus brings us an eternal hope.

Paul closes in verses 11-12 by coming back to himself saying, "I am not ashamed." In verse 8,

“Timothy, be not ashamed,” now in verse 12, he says, “I am not ashamed.” Follow with me in verse 11. He says, “Whereunto I am appointed a preacher,” he ends verse 10 with a statement about the gospel, and it’s to this gospel that, “I am appointed,” three things, “a preacher, and an apostle, and a teacher of the Gentiles. 12 For the which cause I also suffer these things,” that is, because I preach and I’m a messenger and an apostle, because I teach Gentiles—I’m preaching the gospel—I’m suffering these things, “nevertheless I am not ashamed,” why? “for I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day.” What an awesome statement. “Timothy, don’t be ashamed. This is the reason why you don’t need to be ashamed because Jesus died for us and we’re saved by His grace. He took the sting out of death, and He gives us eternal hope. We have a message of the good news, and don’t be ashamed because, ‘I am not ashamed.’” In verse 11 he says, “Whereunto I am appointed a preacher, and an apostle, and a teacher of the Gentiles.”

I want you to note that God called Paul to do three things (I won’t tarry on them), but he was a preacher. The word “preacher” means a herald. It means an announcer, a proclaimer—not a debater, not a discussor, but a proclaimer. A preacher is to do that, just proclaim. He’s not supposed to discuss, debate, or analyze it. He’s just to proclaim and to herald the good news. That’s that word *kerusso*, which means to proclaim or to preach with authority and clarity. Secondly, he’s an apostle, one who is sent or commissioned, a representative. We’re to preach and we’re to be Christ’s representatives as well. Thirdly, he was a teacher. That means that he taught Gentiles, primarily. He was a pastor who had a gift of teaching, and he would instruct people in the Word and in the things of God. This is why Paul was suffering because of his commitment to preach and to teach God’s Word. Our duty is to communicate the gospel as Paul said he did in verse 11.

Then Paul says (verse 12), “For the which cause I also suffer these things,” so what he describes as his ministry in verse 11 brought persecution. Paul said, “...all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution.” Then, he says, “...nevertheless I am not ashamed,” I love that. Paul says, “I am not ashamed of the gospel. I’m not ashamed of the testimony of Christ. I’m not ashamed of the message.”

In closing, what Paul is doing in verse 12 is drawing Timothy’s attention to his example. Did you know the example of other courageous men and women can embolden us? You ought to not only be encouraged from great men and women in the Bible, but you ought to read Christian biographies of men and women used by God. You ought to walk with giants. Turn the tv off and get a good Christian biography of a great missionary or some great man or woman of God and read about their life and what made them great. Someone said, “If I see further than others, it’s because I’ve stood on the shoulders of giants.” So, you walk with them. They can become your friends. You can learn from them. Paul is actually saying to Timothy, “Look at me. Follow my example. Timothy, I’m trying to encourage you not to be ashamed. I want you to know, I’m not ashamed.” Timothy would say, “If Paul’s not ashamed, who am I to be ashamed?” I don’t know about you but whenever I look at or study the life of Paul, I’m encouraged. I want to be like Paul. He’s a hero! He’s somebody I want to emulate. I want to follow this man. I want to be

like this man; and if he's not ashamed, I'm with him. I don't want to be ashamed of the gospel either, and I want to be willing and ready to suffer even for the gospel.

Notice, in closing, what gave Paul this confidence not to be ashamed. He said, "...for I know whom I have believed," as it's so often rightfully pointed out, he doesn't say, "I know what I believe." He says, "I know whom I have believed." Paul is talking about a Person. He's not talking about doctrine, which is important, he's talking about a Person. It's not enough just to fill your head with information, you need to know Christ. You need to trust, rest, have hope and confidence in Him. Paul says, "I know that I've put my life in God's hands. I know that I've trusted Christ with my ministry and my life," and remember, Paul is in prison and had the sentence of death in himself. He knew he would die, but he said, "I'm not afraid. I'm not ashamed." He says, "...for I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded," I'm totally confident, "that he," that is, the Lord, "is able," and I love those verses that describe the ability of God. What is God able to do? "...that he is able to keep that which I have committed," the word is entrusted. It's used of a bank deposit—I've entrusted to Him. He doesn't tell us what it is he entrusted to Him but most likely involved his life and his ministry.

You can put your life in the hands of God, and He won't disappoint you. You can trust God with your marriage. You can trust God with your children. You can trust God with your ministry. You can trust God with your health. You can trust God with your wealth, and God will never, ever disappoint you. God will never disappoint you. If you put your trust in the Lord, you'll not be ashamed. Amen? God will take care of you, God will guide you, and God will provide for you. Paul was able to say as he looked back over his life, "I have run the race. I have finished the course. There's a crown laid up for me, and not for me only, but for all those who loved his appearing." The longer I walk with God, the more confident I become that God can take care of me. There are so many things that we could be afraid of in this life—just getting old is fearful. Getting old isn't for sissies, right, old people? It takes a lot of courage to get old and face your senior years, but God won't let you down. God won't disappoint you. God won't forsake you.

David said, "I have been young, and now am old; yet have I not seen the righteous forsaken, nor his seed begging bread." God will take care of you, so we can be confident that when we trust in Him, we know Whom we believe, "...that he is able to keep," to garrison and protect us, to watch over us. Again, it's the banking concept of we've deposited our money with Him. We've deposited our lives with Him, and He'll take care of us. "...that which I have committed unto him against that day." What day? The day of Christ's coming. The day of the bema (rewards) seat of Christ. It's the day when He will faithfully reward His people, so that's what we look for. That's what we anticipate.

The gospel is that God gave His Son to die on the cross for our sins, He rose from the dead, that if we'll believe in Him we'll be forgiven. Don't be ashamed of that gospel. It's the power of God to salvation. You have the message that God has abolished death and brought life and immortality to light through the good news. Be emboldened, be encouraged, but trust Him with your lives. Don't be ashamed. Don't be afraid. He'll take care of you, and we look forward to that day when the Lord will return. "...against that day," that day, I believe, Paul is referring to

the Lord's coming back and rewarding me for my service. When we hear those words, "Well done, thou good and faithful servant...enter thou into the joy of thy lord."

When we take the bread tonight and drink the cup, we look back, Jesus died for us; we also look around, if there's anything, any unforgiveness or ought in your heart, God has forgiven you, how can you not forgive others; and we look ahead, Jesus said, "I won't drink this fruit of the vine until I drink it with you in My Father's kingdom," so we look ahead. We're going to close in prayer, and the worship team is going to come back up. I really encourage you to not think about getting home, not think about tomorrow, not think about what's going on, you know, think about Jesus. Think about His grace. Think about His love and His mercy. Think about His saving grace. Think about His sovereign purpose—that God saved you in eternity past by His grace which was in Christ Jesus. Let's pray.